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Salla llaha alaihi wa sallam

A CONCISE SURVEY OF THE LIFE AND
WORK OF THE FOUNDER OF ISLAM.

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FOREWORD

The biographical data of any person are ineffaceably coloured by the personality of their first narrators. If one compares the earliest biographies of the Prophet of Islam with those of the founders of other religions or social reforms, one is impressed by several facts unparalleled in history :

There are no legends and no attempts at exaggerations, much less description of a superhuman being, but facts and bare facts are transmitted by scrupulous eye-witnesses, whose first and last aim is veracity. And their hearer or reader applies forthwith to this history what had ever before remained the monopoly of the courts of justice, viz nothing is accepted without proof; the charm of the narration is subordinated to the requirements of trustworthiness and reliability, from generation to generation. The chains (isnad) of transmitters of these facts from generation to generation have been uninterrupted; and they surpass in meticulousness the most exhaustive references found in the best works of modern research.

Another particularity has been the insatiable thirst for knowledge that one encounters in these first narrators, Companions of the Prophet and first-hand witnesses of the events. The conduct of the founder of a religion evidently becomes--and must become--a model to imitate for the community. If one were to ask some non-Muslim such basic and elementary details about the founder of his religion as to whether he fasted and prayed during his missionary life, and if so what was the method of the performance of these pious acts, the reply in most cases will be nil. A Muslim can never be too much thankful to the Companions of the Prophet of

Islam who have given him the possibility to practice both the spiritual and material Islam, in all its details, exactly as was practised by Muhammad of pious memory, -- and not as decided by assemblies of theologians, which would give us rather a man-made religion, and not a God-made one.

In fact no details of the personal behaviour of the Prophet had seemed insignificant to them, and they have set the picture in the frame of the living reality of the Muslim society. If a few pages suffice to note down all that is known, from, birth to death, of the lives of a Zoroaster, a Buddha, a Moses, a Jesus, volumes prove insufficient to contain the details known about the life of the Prophet of Islam, in every aspect of his public or private life, the narrators being his wives, his children, servants, friends and all those who have had occasion of meeting him. Of the millions of persons who had embraced Islam in the life-time of the Prophet, those who have preserved for the posterity long or short narrations number, according to classical authors, more than a hundred thousand. The first-evidence by eye-witnesses is of course priceless.

The biographies of the Prophet of Islam have naturally enough begun with the efforts of the intellectuals from among his Companions, both in prose and verse. If Ibn Ishaq-Ibn Hisham is the most useful among extant works, Muhammad ibn Yusuf ash-Sha'mi and al-Maqrizi are perhaps the most exhaustive, where material is classified in hundreds of chapters. But the raw material--if one may be permitted to call with this name the books of Hadith--is such and so enormous that even after these fourteen centuries it has not yet entirely been subjected to exhaustive, where material is classified in hundreds of chapters. But the raw material--if one may be permitted to call with this name the books

of Hadith--is such and so enormous that even after these fourteen centuries it has not yet entirely been subjected to exhaustive indexing. And many a voluminous collection of Hadith is still waiting to be edited.

But it is not at the exhaustive utilisation of the material that we are aiming here :

The "Seal of the Prophets" was himself aspiring at a world order, above race, language and geographical limitations. After long and bitter experience, the modern civilization is also now forced to revert to it, be that in the Communist or Capitalist West; and naturally the teaching of a prophet who aspired and successfully attempted what we are now requiring deserves deep meditation. Further, by gleaning and rearranging data, we shall try to throw light on certain subjects that interest our contemporaries more but on which classical biographers have not cared to lay much emphasis : cause and effect of facts will receive more our attention. The society in which the Prophet was destined to live merits also to be taken into consideration. Politics, State administration, social institutions, economics, method of creating inter-racial concord, blending of the spiritual and the material in a single and balanced whole, where no aspect of human life is sacrificed and nothing is let to prosper at the expense of something else : it is this reality of Islam which is our ambition to bring into relief in so far as our humble resources and much humbler intellectual capacities permit us to do.

The author is far from intending herewith a piece of research, what is intended is a book for general reading. Nevertheless it is the result of almost sixty years of research. If references are generally lacking here, every single statement is traceable to classical sources. For those who want to verify facts, the following

select bibliography of my previous publications would, I hope, suffice largely :

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15. Le Coran, traduction française, 8th ed. Beyrouth 1973
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22. Ce que l'Islam reconnaît dans le Christianisme, in
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23. Documents sur la diplomatic musulmane a
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:

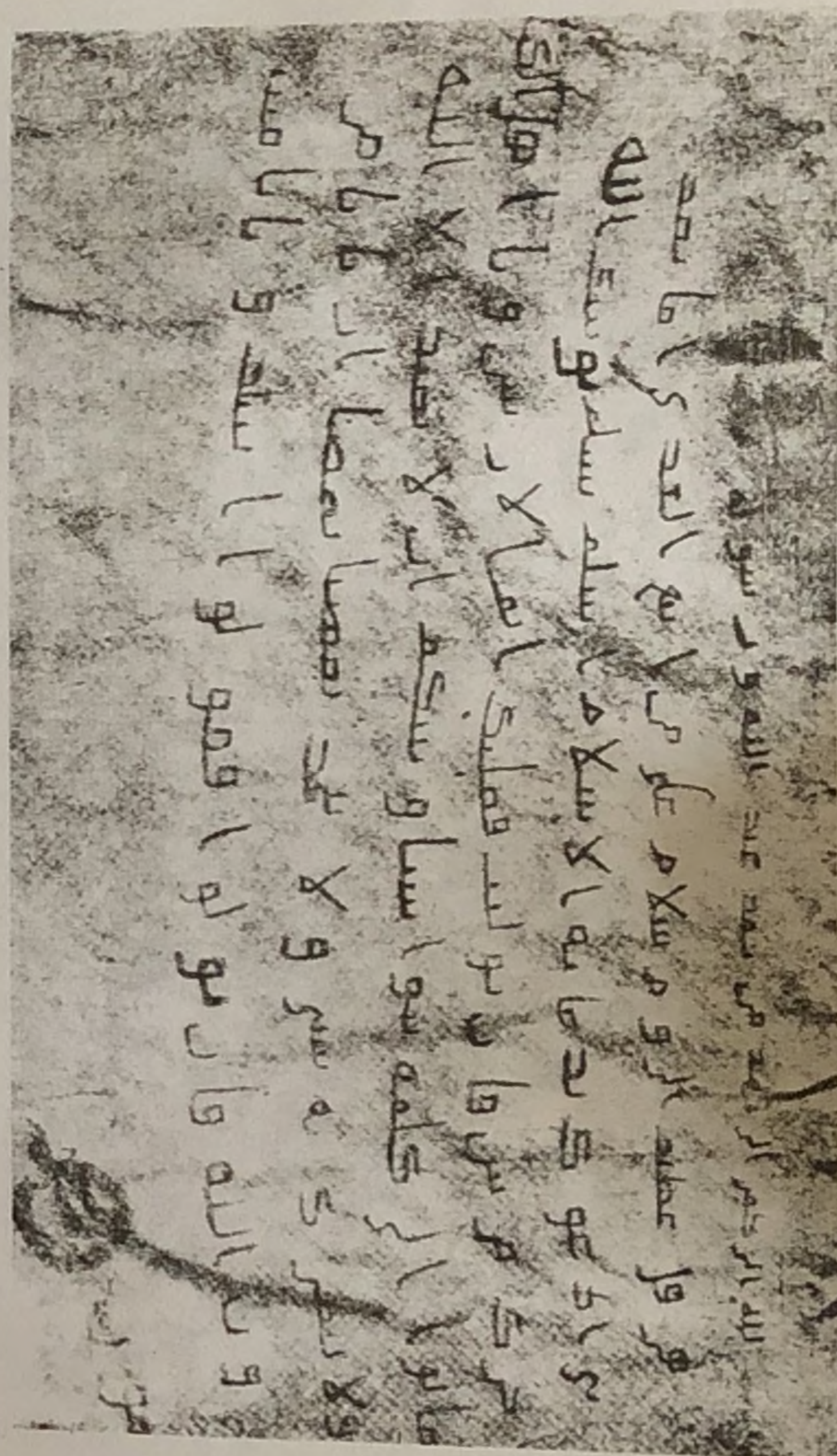
Vol. 1. La Diplomatic musulmane } Paris 1935
2. Corpus des documents }

3rd ed. Beyrouth 1969.

What a luck if we succeed, by a mite, to advance
even a step in the study of this great subject. Enabling
power comes from the Almighty, and glory to Him
alone !

Istanbul, Rabi'ul-Auwal 1392.

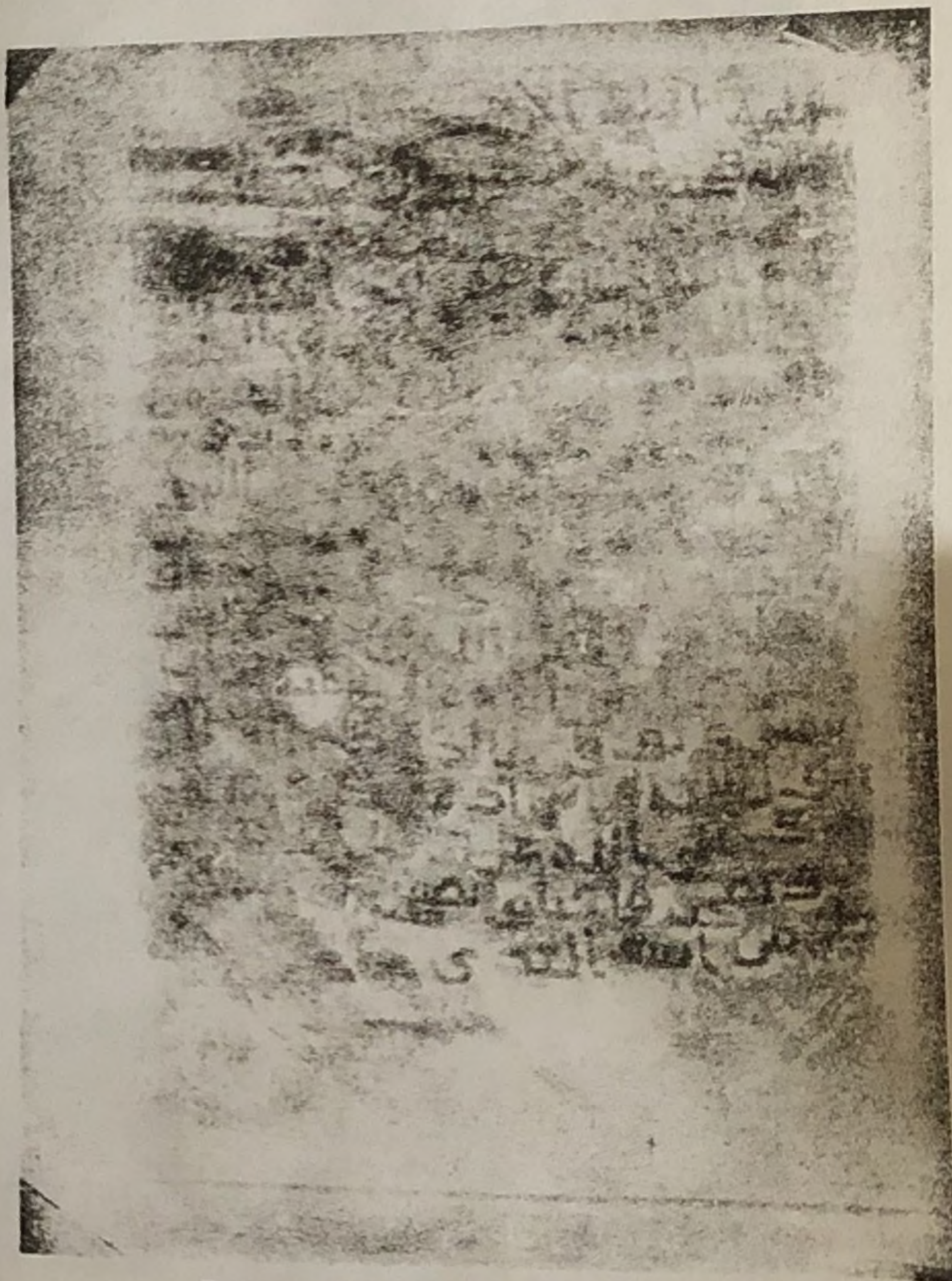
M.H.



Original of Prophet's Letter to Emperor Heraclius
courtesy of ash-Shihab, Beyrouth



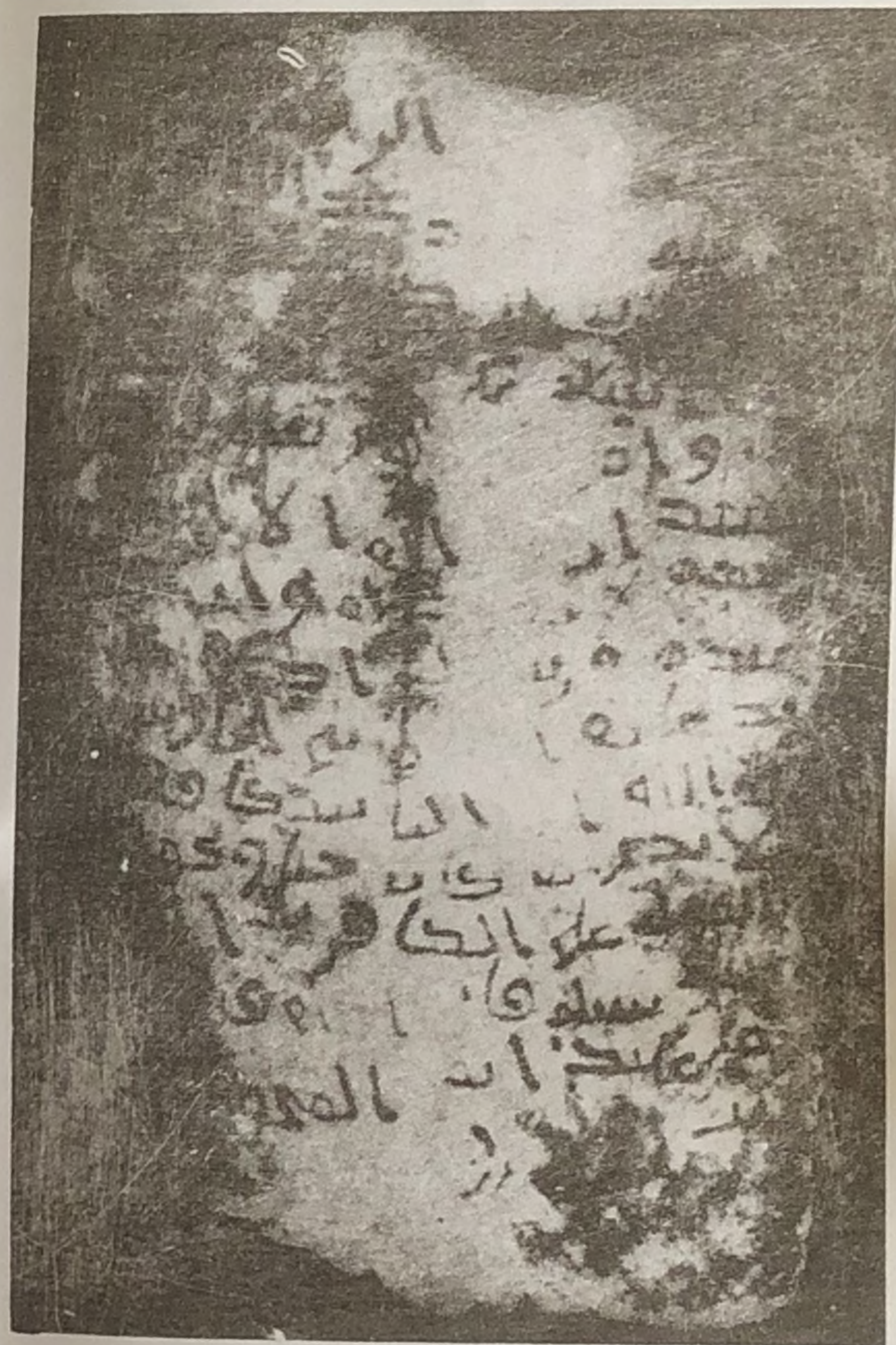
Letter of the Prophet to the Muquqis
see § 215



Letter of the Prophet to the Negus
see § 219

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
 المرسل من سواي سلة مند فاي
 الذي لا اله الا الله
 الله والرحمن
 الله تبارك وتعالى
 سلك في امره
 رسل من الله
 ومحمد - للمسلمين
 الرب - ربنا
 ما من عبد
 ما من عبد

Letter of the Prophet to al-Mundhir
see § 232



Letter of the Prophet to the Kisra
see § 223

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1. It was on Monday 17th June 569 of Christian era--for the determination of which see my article in the **Journal of Pakistan Historical Society**, Karachi, 1968, XVI, 216-9--that a boy was born in an obscure part of the world, at Mecca, in the desert continent of Arabia. Friend or foe, nobody denies that the course of history was changed owing to his activity, be that in matters of religion or politics. After these fourteen hundred and more years, his teaching is still alive and expanding, and his disciples are ruling in three continents with an ever-increasing weight in all fields of international relations. This refers to Muhammad, Prophet of Islam.

2. To write the biography of Muhammad, son of Abdullah and of his wife Aamina, one is handicapped by the excessive number of documents, and not by their paucity. One has to deal with a prophet, in the sense of a guide and leader who based his teaching on revelations coming from God Almighty. Unlike other similar predecessors, Muhammad was not only the founder of a comprehensive religious system, but at the same time a

ruler, a legislator, a conqueror, a mystic, a moralist. Moreover he had been one whose words as well as acts constitute for his community a law of everlasting value, in all walks of life, be they spiritual or temporal, social or moral. Naturally there will also be question of the supernatural and extraordinary.

The Origin and Birth

3. Both the Bible and the Quran agree that Abraham (of about 1800 B.C.) had two sons : Ishmael and Isaac. The Bible being the history of the House of Isaac, there is no mention of Ishmael after his presence along with Isaac to bury their father Abraham. The Quran being revealed to an Ishmaelian prophet, there are some more details, not found in the Bible, meriting to be recorded here. In ancient times, every first born was offered in thanks to God, be that in the multiplication of domesticated animals or agricultural harvest. Even the first-born sons of men were to be immolated (as recorded by the Bible, Exodus xiii, 2 and 12; Ezechiel xx, 26); later a ransom for human firstlings was instituted (Exodus xxxiv, 19-20), but archaeological finds prove that new-born firstlings among human beings were at first effectively put to death. Abraham too had to do that, when he got a son born in his age of despair. When reminded this forgotten duty by God in a dream, he hastened to accomplish it without murmur or hesitation. God was so pleased with his devotion and fervour that He not only saved miraculously the boy, but also announced, as a recompense, the birth of a second son, Isaac (of Quran 37/112). Of course a ransom, in the form of the sacrifice of a sheep, was imposed for saving Ishmael. The sacrifice instituted by Abraham, continued among the Arabs of pre-Islamic days, that is to say, among the descendants of Ishmael, the firstling; naturally not among the descendants of Isaac.

4. Abraham had transferred Ishmael along with his mother Hagar to what later became the town of Mecca--and the spring of Zamzam guaranteed the survival in desert--and Isaac remained with his mother Sarah in Palestine, Abraham passing his time alternately in the two countries. It was Abraham who renewed the building of the Ka'ba, and instituted the pilgrimage to the House dedicated to the One God. From the time of Ishmael to that of Qusaiy, ancestor in the fifteenth generation before Muhammad, there is not much to relate here. The city-state of Mecca was ruled, one after the other by different tribes : first Jurhum and Iyad, later Khuza'a, but the descendants of Ishmael continued to live in Mecca in spite of the change of its masters. Since Qusaiy we are on surer ground, and know the details of the urbanisation, of political reforms : institution of democracy and public consultation, oligarchy (or collegial rule) instead of monarchy and despotism. Ibn Qutaiba speaks of his relations even with Byzantium (Istanbul). Apparently this concerns Theodosius I (379-395).. Qusaiy's son Abd-Manaf developed further foreign relations, especially for trade, and obtained the famous *ilaf*-characters--whose souvenir is perpetuated by the Quran--from the sovereigns of Byzantium, Iran, Abyssinia and Kinda (Yemen), authorizing to lead trade caravans to these countries. In the Byzantine Empire they went as far as Ankara, as Ibn Sa'd has recorded. In the time of 'Abd al-Muttalib, grandson of Abd-Manaf, international situation became critical : the Kindite dynasty of Yemen disappeared, Abyssinians replacing them. These latter invaded Mecca under their ruler Abraha; and in spite of their bringing an elephant and a huge army, elements came to the rescue of the Meccans, and Abraha retreated to die in an epidemic, and the Iranians invaded Yemen to oust the family of Abraha. These retained first on Yemenite throne a local prince--and Abd al-Muttalib led a

delegation of Meccans to congratulate him--but later ousted him also, and Yemen became a province or a colony appended to Mada'in (Ctesiphon).

5. Abd al-Muttalib rediscovered in Mecca, in face of the Ka'ba, the pit of Zamzam whose traces were deliberately effaced by the retreating Khuza'a tribe, during a local war. He had made a vow that if he had 12 male children, he would immolate one of them to God. When his desire was in fact realized, he proceeded to fulfil his vow. One of the sons, Abdullah was designed by lot for the purpose, but the family and friends prevailed to consult first some soothsayer. A celebrated kahina of the epoch suggested a very reasonable solution : one should decide by lot between the son and the customary blood-money; and if the die (*qura'a*) fell on the son, to increase in the quantity of the blood-money, until it falls on the ransom and not on the son. In fact the usual ten camels did not please the divinity, and gradually they were raised upto one hundred. when at last the die fell on camels, the honest Abd al-Muttalib repeated scrupulously thrice the lot, to be sure that God definitely agrees to this ransom.

6. Abdullah married in the town, and his wife Aamina belonged to the clan of Zuhra. A child was born in due course, who was destined to be the Prophet of Islam. Generally it is said that Abdullah died a few weeks before the birth of his son, but there are also several classical biographers who affirm that Abdullah died some weeks after the birth of the child. Abdullah had gone on a commercial trip to the North, and when he was at Madina--where from his paternal grandmother had also hailed--he died there, and his tomb, constructed in the Turkish epoch, exists even today under the Saudi regime.

7. The birth of great men accompanies always extraordinary events, which may or may not have a relation with the coming into the world of a future hero. It was Monday 17th June 569. Zoroastrians worship Fire, and never let it extinguish in their temples; yet this night the fire in the principal temple of Mada'in did die out, after having burnt continuously for several hundreds of years. In an earthquake, 14 of the towers of the palace of the Persian emperor fell down. And so on and so forth. Aamina was alone when pains of childbirth overtook her. Suddenly she saw some tall ladies coming to give her company. On demand, one said : I am Aasia wife of the Pharaoh (who had saved the life of Moses thrown in a box in the Nile), the other was Mary mother of Jesus, yet others were the houris of Paradise. (When a new prophethood, new ministry begins, those charged with the function previously should come to receive the new incumbent. For a lady during child-birth, of course Moses and Jesus could not come, hence Aasia and Mary represented them.) The angels then covered the body of Aamina with their wings, to protect her from the indiscreet gaze, and soon the child was born, who was circumcised by nature, and fell on earth in the position of prostration, raising his index as if attesting the belief in One God. He was covered by a white cloud, concealing him for a moment, and a voice said : Take him round in the East and the West and inside the oceans, so that every creature : angel, beast, bird, fish and all else make acquaintance with its new prophet. When this cloud dissipated, the child reappeared; then he was covered by another cloud, and a voice ordered : Give him the attributes of all the former prophet : conduct of Adam, knowledge of Seth, courage of Noah, love of God of Abraham, language of Ishmael, submission of Isaac, eloquence of Salih, sagacity of Loth, knowledge of the unseeables of Jacob beauty of Joseph, rigidity of Moses, endurance of Job, obedience of Jonas, struggle of Joshua,

melody of David, love of Daniel, dignity of Elias, chastity of John the Baptist, asceticism of Jesus; --and plunge him in the characteristics of the prophets. When this cloud also dispersed, the child reappeared. Then three persons, angels in fact, gave him a wash three times in a silver tub, then covered him in a white silk stuff warmed him awhile under their wings, then remitted him to his mother and disappeared. Such is at least the impressive narration of some of the classical authors.

8. Aamina gave him the name "Muhammad", as she was directed to do in a dream during the early days of the conception. It was apparently the grandfather who called him fondly Ahmad. Accordingly to a practice, in use in Arabia even in our 20th century, new-born children in towns are entrusted to foster-mothers, to be reared in the pure air of the desert. It was Halima of the tribe of Hawazin (of the region of Ta'if), who a few days later passed by Mecca, and got the chance of taking the child in her charge for which she never would regret, for untold prosperity came along with him. When Halima nursed the child for the first time, it contented with one of her breasts and never accepted the second one, leaving this for the foster-brother. (Prophets must be honest from the childhood.) He passed about four years in the desert, coming from time to time to Mecca to see the mother, and the nurse also getting remunerations. The child visited also the regional fairs (Ukaz etc.) along with the foster-mother. One day Shaima', his elder foster-sister was carrying him, and probably tickled him too much, so that the child was excited and bit the shoulder of the sister so violently that traces of teeth-bite remained there always. Some 55 years later, when the old Shaima' was captured by a Muslim detachment, and brought before the Prophet, she said she was his foster-sister, and reminded the childish biting on her shoulder. The Prophet recollected, and naturally

treated her in a manner worthy of a loving and affectionate brother.

9. Halima had pretexts to guard the child with her beyond the usual nursing period. One day in the desert her son came running to tell that some people had come, cut open the bosom of this Meccan brother. Frightened, the parents ran to the spot. Muhammad was sitting on a rock and gazing in the direction of the sky. On demand he told that these strangers had cut his bosom open, brought out the heart, cut off a black spot to throw it away, saying that it was Satan's portion, washed the heart and replaced it, covering the chest, and flew up; and that it was they that he was following in flight in the sky when the parents came up. Naturally the nurse was persuaded that it was better to remit the child to her mother, in order to avoid any future trouble to the marvellous child.

10. Aamina then took the boy to make a pilgrimage to the tomb of his father at Madina. The Banu'n-Najjar, to whom the mother of Abd al-Muttalib belonged, had conserved relations with their Meccan relatives. Aamina too stayed with them for a considerable time, apparently for two years, during which time the boy Muhammad learned also swimming in a neighbouring well; and later he still recollected certain details of life there and the boys and girls with whom he played.

11. When returning to Mecca, Aamina died en route, at Abwa'. The handmaid, Umm Aiman, managed to take the child to Mecca and hand him over to his grandfather, Abd al-Muttalib. The old child loved him very tenderly; and some years later when he died, the boy of 8 years marched behind the coffin crying loudly on the loss of this loving and beloved grandfather. An

uncle, Abu-Talib, full brother of his father, took him now in charge, but the boy had vow to earn his livelihood. He became the shepherd of a neighbour, Abu-Mu'ait according to a report; and thus contributed to the meagre resources of the family. Further, he helped, perhaps even replaced his uncle in the shop of cloth-stuff etc., for he was more intelligent and more dependable than the sons of Abu-Talib.

12. He was 9 years old when his uncle undertook a caravan journey to Palestine. Seeing how the boy was afflicted at the idea of being separated, even temporarily, from his beloved uncle, Abu-Talib decided to take him also along with him. The Christian Palestine was full of monasteries, where zealous monks encountered strangers in transit, more for proselytism than for charitable and disinterested hospitality. It is related that a certain Bahira invited Abu-Talib and his companions to a meal. Muhammad could be present there. Which language Bahira spoke, we do not know. Perhaps he knew a few words of Arabic to address his guests and to the youngest of them. It is amusing to see the flight of imagination of the French orientalist Carra de Veaux, who has written a whole book "on Bahira the author of the Quran." Can a boy of 9 years learn by heart in a few minutes the 114 chapters of the Quran, and a generation later communicate them to his people as a Divine message?

13. May be it is from this epoch that dates the following little incident of serious consequences : One day two brothers, Abu-Talib and Abu-Lahab had some dispute and ultimately began fighting. Abu-Talib was thrown to the ground, and Abu-Lahab, sitting on his belly, began smiting him. Muhammad was present, he ran to the help of his tutor, pushed Abu-Lahab away and gave the possibility to Abu-Talib to rise and to throw in

his turn Abu-Lahab to the ground and give him good slaps. In rage he said : "O Muhammad, I am also your uncle as Abu-Talib, you came to his help but not for me! Why? By God, my heart will never love you, never". In fact, with the age, the prejudice and antipathy of Abu-Lahab towards his nephew increased.

14. A few years later there was a local war in Mecca, during the hajj season. It is said that Muhammad had protected with a shield one of his uncles--Hamza?--while the latter shot arrows on the enemy. Another report says that Muhammad wounded the enemy commander, Mula'ib al-Asinna, with a lance, during the same battle. This tribe also will remain for long an inveterate enemy of Islam.

15. The bloodshed during the sacred months of the pilgrimage pricked many a conscience in the holy town. Az-Zubair, the eldest uncle and head of the family of the prophet, took the initiative of convening a public meeting, in the house of a venerated old rich man, Abdullah ibn Jud'an, where it was decided to found an Order of Chivalry, the famous Hilf al-Fudul, whose members swore to come to the help of any and every person oppressed in the town. The young Muhammad also participated enthusiastically in the ceremony of oath-taking. Later, when he was recognized by the country as a Messenger of God, he used still to say : "I have attended the meeting to inaugurate Hilf al-Fudul; "I am not prepared to fore-go this (honour) even against a whole herd of red camels, and even today if anybody calls me for help in the name of this order. I shall run to his help". The tribes of Hashim, Muttalib, Zuhra and Taim had participated in this alliance for charity.

16. Perhaps it was for reason of tribal jealousies that the Sa'd ibn Sahm did not take part in it, but were

as eager to act likewise. They had good relations with the Zuhra tribes, (of the family of the mother of the Prophet), and they both instituted the Hilf as-Silah (alliance for reconciliation), saying that if anybody from among the Quraishites or even their allies of the confederated tribes of Ahabish (which are not to be confounded with Abyssinians) created trouble or dispute, they would try to reconcile the parties. The Zuhra was the common denominator in the two orders of chivalry, and perhaps in this way there was even a collaboration between the two.

Marriage and Family Life

17. Muhammad was of 24 years, and had acquired the surname of "Honest" (Al-Amin) for his irreproachable conduct in business and other transactions. His uncle and tutor, Abu-Talib was now too old to travel for commerce. So it was now up to Muhammad to undertake journeys in different regions, probably during annual fairs. A local young and rich widow, Khadija, eagerly consented to confide her merchandise to Muhammad, along with a slave, to go to Palestine. With his honesty and professional know-how, Muhammad bartered out the goods he had with him, and brought to Mecca the double of what Khadija was expecting normally. She was also honest, and remunerated with double of what she had originally promised. Acquaintance developed for her into friendship and passion. Muhammad was too shy and too poor to think of demanding the hand of Khadija. She consulted her female friends, and employed one of them to suggest to Muhammad to demand her in marriage.

18. Women seem to have enjoyed a very high position in Arabian society. About Salma an-Najjariya, mother of Abdal-Muttalib, it is reported by Ibn Hisham

that, whenever she married, she stipulated that she would retain the right, to divorce her husband whenever she liked. True there are some reported cases of burying alive of little girls. But even these extremely rare cases, depending on individual outlook, emanated from the exaggerated notion of the honour of women--and human logic is strange! In a society of bellum omnium contra omnes (war of everybody against everybody else), the fathers wanted that their daughters should not one day fall captive in the hands of an enemy, nor be kidnapped, to be violated by unscrupulous ruffians. As to Khadija, the following details show the customs and practices of pre Islamic Mecca : The affair was first settled between Muhammad and the emissary of Khadija, to the effect that he may count on her consent in case of demand. (Historians add that, owing to her beauty and riches, many a Meccan potentate had already tried to marry her, but she had rejected the offers.) So Muhammad came along with his uncles and other relatives and friends to the house of the prospective wife. First his uncle rose up and delivered a lecture : "You know Muhammad; no youth of the Quraishites can be weighed with him if Muhammad does not outweigh him in dignity, nobility, excellence and intelligence. If he has no great riches, you all know that riches are but transitory, like the shadow : they come and they go. He has a great inclination for Khadija, daughter of Khuwailid, and she too reciprocates him". Thereupon 'Amr ibn Asad, uncle of Khadija stood up and said among other things : "Muhammad is like a male camel of noble progeny, who does not require to be struck on the nostril to sit down". As the father of Khadija was no more in life, it is he who married the couple. They passed the first night in the house of Abu-Talib; then Khadija returned to her house, together with her husband. There is no difference of opinion as to the age of Muhammad : he was 25 years old; as to Khadija, some say that she had attained 40 years of age, yet several others affirm that she was only

28 years old. This latter report seems to be corroborated by the biological fact, that she gave birth to seven children, 3 sons and 4 daughters, from the Prophet : Qasim, Tahir; Taiyib, Zainab, Ruqaiya, Umm Kulthum and Fatima.

19. Muhammad had thus to separate from his uncle Abu-Talib, who was deprived of the helping hand of his nephew to earn livelihood for his big family. Muhammad was not unmindful of that. Not only he took to him one of the sons of Abu-Talib, i.e. Ali, but persuaded on his youngest uncle al-Abbas to adopt another of his sons, thus lightening the family burden of Abu-Talib.

20. It was natural that Muhammad continued to remain in the commerce, fructifying the capital of his wife. Many a time the historians relate that whenever a deserving case came to his knowledge--his foster-mother during a famine, other orphans, widows, stranded strangers, etc.--he recommended them to his wife for aid, which she always gave willingly. This fact would implicitly show that women were absolute owners of their property, and even their husbands had no right to spend it without their consent. Of the commercial journeys of the Prophet, we see him several times in Hubasha (Yemen), and at least once in 'Uman (territory of the 'Abd al-Qais tribe), probably in connection with the international fair of Daba, of which Ibn al-Kalbi records :

"Then the fair of Suhar, in 'Uman. They left Mushaqqar on the first of Rajab and arrived at Suhar on the 20th of the month. The fair remained open for five days; and (the ruler) al-Julanda ibn al-Mustakbir imposed there the tithe. Thereafter the fair of Daba, which is one of the two major ports of

Arabia. The merchants coming from Sind, from Hind (Pakistan-India), from China, as well as people from the East and the West attended it. This fair used to open on the last day of the month of Rajab. The transactions took place by offer and acceptance. (The king of 'Uman) al-Julanda ibn al-Mustakbir imposed on them the tithe as customs duty, as he did in the fair of Suhar, and his conduct was like the conduct of kings in other places".

As a parenthesis it could be brought into relief that this interesting passage talks of Indians coming to this Arabian fair. If the Holy Prophet had also attended it before Islam--as it appears from a narrative recorded by Ibn Hanbal--then one can easily explain another hadith cited by Ibn Hisham, that when the delegation of the Yemenite tribe Balharith came to Madina to declare its conversion to Islam the Prophet is said to have asked : "Who are these people who look like the Indians (rijal al-Hind)?" This text speaks also of the Chinese. Al-Mas'udi explicitly says that sometimes they came in their junks (boats), visited Bahrain, 'Uman and even Ubulla (later : Basra). The Prophet may have met them also there and may have been impressed not only by their industry but also by the distance of their land. Hence perhaps his celebrated exhortation : "Seek knowledge be it even in China for seeking the knowledge is the duty of every Muslim". One last point : The Meccans visited not only these and similar fairs in Arabia, but went also to foreign countries, like Abyssinia, Iraq, Syria and in their caravans, went even as far as Ankara, as we have already mentioned.

21. Some details may not be out of place of the visit of the Prophet to these far off places. First Daba. Ibn Hanbal says, when the delegation of the tribe If 'Abdul-Qais arrived to see him in Madina, the Prophet

put them many questions about persons and places of their country. Astonished, they exclaimed : "But you know our country better than we". Thereupon the Prophet replied : "I have made there a long sojourn". Yemen and Syria-Palestine are explicitly and repeatedly cited by his biographers. Yemen is separated from Abyssinia by the narrow channel of Bab'ul-Mandab, and was frequently crossed over in both directions, by Meccans going to Abyssinia, and Abyssinians coming to Arabia and Mecca. (In the early days of Islam, Muslim Meccans had also gone there as refugees, as we shall describe later). Some modern authors think that the Prophet may also have gone there, and even met the Negus. They deduce this from the fact that, when the Prophet gave a letter of introduction to his cousin Ja'far ibn Abu-Talib, addressed to the Negus, it was couched in rather familiar terms, for it said : "I am sending to you my cousin Ja'far, accompanied by some Muslims. When he arrives there, give them hospitality and do not be tyrannical", as Tabari has reported. Be it as it may.

22. A touching little incident of about this epoch will shed a flood of light on the character and social conduct of Muhammad. A young lad, an Arab was sold in the market of Mecca as a slave. His name was Zaid ibn Haritha, and he belonged to the the great North-Arabian tribe Kalb. In a feud, a neighbouring tribe had captured him and sold him. The boy was handsome and intelligent. Khadija bought him, and presented him to her husband as a personal servant. The bereaved father of the boy, the chief of his tribe, made long researches until he came to know the whereabouts of his son. He came to Mecca with enough money to ransom him. When he met the Prophet, the latter was touched with the pathetic story, and said : There is a better alternative to purchasing, viz., I shall ask the boy himself : if he wanted to go with you, you may take him without the

least compensation! So the Prophet sent word to Zaid, who came at once, and recognized his father. And on the question of the Prophet, he said unhesitatingly : You have been treating me with such an affection that I prefer to remain as a servant in your home than as a master in my father's! The Prophet was overwhelmed with this touching reply, took him by hand to the courtyard of the Ka'ba, and publicly announced there : I liberate Zaid, and I adopt him as my son! Haritha, father of Zaid, had to return back with a heavy heart but fully assured as to the well-being of his son.

23. Khadija had two children from her previous husbands, from one a son, and from the other a daughter, and both were called "Hind". Apparently, the children remained in the respective families of their fathers, and came to visit their mother only from time to time, to receive affection and gifts. The son, Hind ibn Abi Hala seems to have been much attached to the Prophet, his step-father. For, later, in Islam, he is the principal and enthusiastic narrator of the physionomy of the Prophet in touching terms : "... his mouth was like a box of ruby, full of pearls, his face was more beautiful than the moon when it is full..." There is unmistakable intimacy, and an extraordinary love and respect.

24. Merchants in Mecca took turns for leading caravans to foreign countries. Even before his marriage, Muhammad was such an associate with a certain Sa'ib, who used to relate later : "I was a partner of Muhammad; when he went out with my goods, on his return to Mecca, he gave me full account of the business he had made of my merchandise, and this even before going to his house and taking rest and meeting the family; on the other hand, if it was my turn to go, on my return he would welcomed me, ask me only about my health and well-being, and not a word about his capital, and there was

never a quarrel about the price or other affairs of this joint stock trade."

Stimulus to Spiritual Inquiry

25. Mecca was a great religious centre of paganism. Meccans did believe in the One God, thought they worshipped also idols, and this as "intercessors before God", as they said. The Ka'ba and its hajj, instituted by their ancestor Abraham continued to exist, and its reputation was so great that Arabs of all parts of the peninsula thronged there every year, an unmistakable proof of which will be furnished by the list of the tribal contingents Muhammad would approach, on the eve of his migration to Madina.

26. There were many idols in and around the House of God, the Ka'ba. Hubal is reputed to be the principal one, since it was placed on the top of the Ka'ba. It was brought from Moab, in Palestine, through purchase, gift or otherwise, we are not told, and was a sculptured stone, and may have been more beautiful than the others. According to tradition, there were 360 idols around the building of the Ka'ba, may be according to the number of days in a year. The duplicates of the idols of other tribes were also there, like Manat etc., and equally venerated by the Meccans.

27. It is said that the Meccan pagans had a morning prayer in front of the Ka'ba, and there was tolerance : everybody took postures of respect as he liked, bending, prostrating and the like.

28. As to the worship of idols, a Muslim would relate later : "I was a slave at Mecca, before Islam. My master used to give me every morning some butter and a jug of milk, which I had to place before the Manat, as an

offering; and my master used to warm me : Don't consume it, otherwise you will be punished by the deity for his profanation. By God! I saw that as soon as I left the place, a dog used to come, licked the offering and, before away, urinated on the idol!"

29. In front of the Ka'ba, there were two statues, one of a man and the other of a woman, Isaf and Na'ila. A legend said that this young couple wanted one day an intimacy, and finding no other place suitable, entered the building of the temple of Ka'ba and polluted it with an ugly sin. Forthwith they were punished by God, and turned into stones. Discovered later by the people, their petrified bodies were exposed in the courtyard of the Ka'ba, as a warning to one and all. One the eve of Islam, ignorance or perversion was so great that even these statues were considered as deities, and people adored them. (Perhaps this concerned the foreigners, who did not know the story of their origin). Anyhow, it was there that animals were sacrificed, and their blood splashed on the venerated Black Stone of the Ka'ba.

30. Inside the Ka'ba, there were fresco painting, including those of Abraham and of the Virgin Mary with the baby Jesus. The presence of Abraham is a sure proof that the pre-Islamic Meccans knew him and honoured him.

31. Even every house had its statues and other objects of cult and veneration, as well will learn from the following little story : When the Prophet conquered Mecca, and people embraced Islam, there was Hind, wife of Abu-Sufyan also; she was beating the statues in her house and breaking them and hurling : "For long had we been deceived on account of you". It is said that even Khadija, when married before Islam to the Prophet, used to venerate some idols before going to bed, but that the

Prophet, used to venerate some idols before going to bed, but that the Prophet explained to her their futility, and she abandoned the practice.

32. The building of the Ka'ba received all honours, befitting the House of God Almighty. Among others, it was covered with hangings even on the outside walls, and a guardian used to fumigate the curtains with burning incense. It was 605 when on a tempestuous day sparks of fire were thrown by the wind on the curtains of the Ka'ba, which caught fire and the whole building was burnt out. The tempest was followed by torrential rains, and these dealt the final blow, so that the building of the Ka'ba crumbled down in heaps.

33. Naturally people thought at once of rebuilding the sacred edifice. The tempest had not spared the sea. A ship taking Egyptian materials destined for Yemen was caught there, and in the shipwreck, the life of some passenger was somehow saved. Hearing the news, the Meccans hurried to the spot for help. They not only purchased the flotsam saved by these people, but even relinquished the customary tithe on the merchandise; they went so far as to purchase the timber of the wrecked ship. (They thought that this would be useful for the roof of the Ka'ba). Among these foreigners there was a Coptic carpenter, Baqum also, who consented to work for the project.

34. Contributions were asked from everybody in the town, and it was solemnly announced that for the sacred building only honest money should be offered; prostitutes and usurious peoples were asked not to contribute anything.

35. But everything else was not to eas. Before reconstructing, one had to demolish the remaining

ruins, and clear the debris. The very idea of giving a blow to even the ruined wall of the House of God was horrifying to them. Further, inside the Ka'ba, there was a deep pit, and visitors used to throw in it their offerings of al sorts--and sometimes unscrupulous robbers also came there to steal what they could and one such incident is attributed to Abu-Lahab also in his youth, who was short of money for a party of drinking and singing girls--and these offerings had attracted a huge serpent to make it its abode. When the pit was deprived of its roof, the serpent used to creep from time to time to the top of the pit, naturally causing terror. On one such occasion, when people were deliberating whether the ruins of the Ka'ba should or should not be demolished, a serpent-eater secretary-bird appeared, and making a dart, captured the serpent and flew away, to the great rejoicing of the Meccans. The position of those for the demolishing was strengthened, and they said : "God wants that we build His house anew, and it is He who has caused the Ka'ba to get rid of the serpent." So one old and venerated Meccan advanced, and gave the first few blows to dig the ruins. Then he stopped and said : "Wait a night, if nothing happens, tomorrow morning we shall proceed with the work in right earnest." And in fact nothing ominous happened during the night. Tradition says, when the workers cleared the walls to the lowest strata of foundation, they found there green stones which were dentured for being better consolidated. That was from the time of Abraham, they say. They did not want to disturb them, and in fact found in them an indication of the exact demensions of the length and breadth, and also orientation. In fact the walls are not North-South and East-West but Northeast-Southwest etc.

36. Everybody worked for clearing the debris as well as for the reconstruction; apparently women were

not there, only men. It is reported that Muhammad, when transporting big stones, from some distance to the compound, put them on his shoulders, and since there was no cushion to interpose, his shoulder was wounded, the work of the four walls was divided between the various tribes inhabiting Mecca.

37. In one of the corners, on the left of the door of the edifice, there was a stone of black colour, distinct from the colour of the stones of the rest of the building and served as the departing point of the circumambulations. It was hollow of convex shape from outside, where the pilgrims posed their hands gave a reverential kiss or splashed the blood of the animals immolated there. It is at the height of about a meter from the ground. When the work reached to the point when this stone had to be replaced where it ought to be, a dispute arose as to who should have this honour. It was at the juncture of two walls, so nobody could claim it as falling in his part of the work. Others also wanted to obtain the privilege, and even swords were unsheathed to prevent rivals doing that by force. An old sage intervened to calm the spirits, and said : How can one shed blood in the sacred territory? And proposed a solution : Leave it to the providence, whoever turns up first let him arbitrate! It was Muhammad, and everybody hailed him : "The honest is coming, the honest is coming". When he learned the story of the dispute, he asked for a sheet of cloth to be brought to him. He placed the sacred Black Stone on it, and asked that a representative of each and every tribe should raise the sheet of cloth, and when it was brought near the point of the building where it had to be posed he affixed the stone there with his hands. Everybody was satisfied. In the Meccan aristocracy, one comes across the name of a family of al-Jadir, i.e. the architect, who was entrusted with the function and duty of constantly looking after

the building of the Ka'ba and repairing it whenever necessary. He must have directed the technical aspect of the work, which was soon brought to a successful end, with the exception that the timber of the shipwreck did not suffice to cover the entire roof of the Ka'ba. Ingenuously they decided that there should be a sort of outer veranda which should have no roof, but completely exposed to the sky, and that people should be able to enter there at all times, whereas the rest of the building, with its door, was opened only at fixed times, and probably with entrance fee. The open part concerned the Hatum (also called Hjr), which seem formerly to have been the pit where offerings were thrown. Thus the Ka'ba became a quadrangular room, superposed by a semi-circular projection, the whole giving the aspect of a heart (). The symbolism is not at all despicable. There is a celebrated "saintly saying" (hadith qudsi) : "God says : neither My earth could contain Me nor My heavens, but the heart of the Believer could contain Me". The House of God must be in the shape of a heart. It is an awe-inspiring coincidence, that the very word "Ka'ba, in Arabic means both to be square and to be round.

38. If the outside of the building was embellished by 360 statues of idols, the inside was decorated with wall-paintings. They must have been beautiful--and we shall revert to them again--yet it is not known who accomplished that. May be a Christian, since one of the frescos portrayed Virgin Mary and baby Jesus. According to historians, on the conquest of the town later, the Prophet had ordered to wash away the frescos; but traces were still visible for more than half a century, until Abdullah ibn az-Zubair demolished the building to re-construct it anew. This leads us to recall a curious fact : According to al-Bukhari and other sources, the Black Stone was brought by Adam along with him from

Paradise, that in the beginning it was white, but that the touches of the impious sinners from among the pilgrims had rendered it black. A more complete narration is given by Ibn Abd Rabbih (*al-'Iqd al-Fard*, ed. Bulaq, III, 364), who reports the staying of the Prophet as: "The touches of the sinners and the splashing of the blood of the immolated animals"; and adds: During the reign of Abdullah ibn az-Zubair, when the building was renewed, it was found that the Black Stone was in fact white, that only its outer convex and had become black, and that it was a block of some three cubits.

39. Muhammad was then of 35 years of age. When the House dedicated to the One God and so piously constructed turned into a pantheon of innumerable idols it must have shocked the nobler spirits, who began meditating over the fact whether one's own handicraft should become one's own idol and object of cult? What began to happen there, we do not know precisely, yet we know that the Quran (8/35) disdainfully describes their method of prayer as: "mere claspings of hands and whistling". (In certain countries, idol worship still retains similar elements, and by shouting and claspings it is intended to frighten evil spirits away). We also know that some seekers of truth, like Zaid ibn 'Amr ibn Nufail, a relative of the future caliph 'Umar, not only abandoned the idol worship, but even was opposed to eating the flesh of animals immolated and offered to idols, and used to say: "O my Lord! if I knew which way of my worshipping Thee pleases Thee, I shall do that, but since I do not know that, I prefer falling prostrate before Thee with face and palms posed on the ground".

40. Muhammad was an intimate friend of this Zaid. He too began meditating and discussing with friends on religious and spiritual questions. We have no details of these discussions, but it is reported that among

his friends, whom he frequented much, was 'Addas, a Christian slave, running the shop of his master. (Muhammad was also in the commerce).

41. When his anxiety increased, he decided to make a pious retreat for the whole month of Ramadan in the well-known cave of Hira', in the nearby celebrated hill Jabal an-Nur. (Curiously enough, *Hira'* means research, and *Jabal an-Nur* means mountain of light). It is said that not only his friend Zaid ibn 'Amr ibn Nufail, but also his own grandfather 'Abd al-Muttalib used likewise to retire in piety in the same cave. He took with him some provisions, which he shared with the stray travellers who passed thereby, and his wife, Khadija, replenished the provisions from time to time. After one month of meditation, on which we have no details, he returned to the "civil life", and first made the ritual seven-fold circumambulation of the Ka'ba and thereafter went home.

42. The experience seems to have pleased him so much, that it became his annual habit. For five consecutive years, we see him retiring from worldly life, including the family and children, and passing a whole month in seclusion, praying and pondering over questions that came to his mind, may be: Who has created the universe, what is the object of human life, what happens after the death, and the like.

43. It has been my privilege and good fortune to have had the occasion of visiting this cave. The hill Jabal an-Nur lies in Eastern suburbs of Mecca, about three to four kilometers from the centre of the town, and one who goes to Mina, for pilgrimage, sees it on his left hand. A tall mountain of conical shape, isolated from the chain of other hills around. One sees it even when coming from Jidda to Mecca, and one is impressed by its lofty

stature. It takes some time to climb to the top. En route the up-hill way, I found a small cistern carved out in the rocks, and I was told that it dates from the Turkish time. Occasional rains fill it, and may serve at least for savage beasts to profit by for a considerable time. The cave is on the top, and is formed by rocks which are superposed : the earth has been washed away from inside, and big blocks of stone serve to make the walls and the roof of this secluded place. The cave is high enough, so that a man can stand with full stature, and it is long and wide enough for a man to sleep at ease. It is more long than broad, and by providence it is turned in the direction of the Ka'ba.

44. Mecca was a cosmopolitan city, and although the overwhelming majority of its inhabitants were idolatrous, there were yet individuals who, in the search for the "truth", had also become atheist, rationalist or else. Two conversions to Christianity are also recorded, but in one case it was the ambition to become king of Mecca with the help of the Christian Byzantium, and in the other to save life from the tyranny of an unscrupulous prince of Ghassan. The curious fact in the Meccan paganism is that people did believe in the One God, yet not in the resurrection and Last Judgement. Muhammad was still youthful, he was barely 35; and his beloved wife just three years older, yet the quest for the metaphysical knowledge became increasingly intense in him, and no child was born to Khadija after his turn in the life of her husband.

45. His biographers relate that during the years when he was spiritually agitated, and was more and more given to prayers and meditation, he began to have extraordinary experience : somebody seemed to call him from behind; and when he turned thereto there was nobody to see; stones and trees seemed loudly to greet

him when he passed through them, and naturally he was terrified. This may date from the later years of the retreats in the Hira.' That was of course a fore-taste and a preparation to support the great shock that was yet in store, namely the visit of an angel, bringing a Divine revelation, which must really be too heavy for a mortal to support in the ordinary course of material life. One will appreciate therefore easily the meaningful reason of the following narration of Ibn Is'haq, regarding the first revelation.

The Latest Manifestation of God

46. During the last days of the month of Ramadan, during the fifth annual retreat, one night when the Prophet was asleep in the cave of Hira', he saw a most marvellous dream : An angel came to visit him, carrying a written document, enveloped in a precious silk piece, and said : "O Muhammad, I am Gabriel, God has sent me to communicate to you His message; read this". "But I am not lettered, I can't read", was the reply. Thereupon Gabriel squeezed him in his arms, and pressed him so strong that Muhammad thought he would die of suffocation. Then Gabriel relaxed him and repeated : "Read it". Again the same reply, and again a squeezing stronger than before, and then a relaxation and the demand for the third time to read. On the repetition of the negative reply, the archangel squeezed him for the third time in his arms, stronger than ever, and then relaxed him and said :

Read, with the name of Thy Lord, Who has created
Who has created man of a drop of blood!
Read, and thy Lord is most bounteous,
Who has taught by pen :
Who has taught man what he knew not !
(Qur'an 96/1-5)

47. This happened popularly on 27th Ramadar, but according to the narration preferred by the great biographer as-Suhaili, it was on Monday 17th Ramadan of the year 13 Before Hijra, corresponding to 22nd December 609.

48. What an inspiring vision! An unlettered though very honest and pious merchant was to become the prophet of reading and writing, and had to discover that all culture, all civilisation survived and progressed by being deposited in Pen, in written records. One adds new ideas to former knowledge, if that could be known, and the accumulated experience of men is the glory of humanity, distinguishing it from the rest of created beings.

49. According to our sources, Gabriel gave then a kick on the rock to make a spring gush--apparently the dream continues--and showed to the Prophet how to make albutions, and showed also how to celebrate service of worship to God, with two cycles (rak'ats). Then he departed.

50. Muhammad awoke. He was so much terrified that he decided to return home. The winter chill of December night was a further reason why on his unexpected arrival he asked his wife: "cover me with blankets, cover me with blankets". At last when he recovered his normal senses, he related to the wife what he had seen, adding: I am afraid that I have also become one of those seers and soothsayers that I detested so much. The affectionate wife comforted him and consoled him by saying: "You have always been generous, charitable and obliging to every poor and needy; God would certainly not abandon you nor let you

succumb to the Devil."

51. Next morning she took him to her Christian cousin, Waraqa ibn Naufal--and according to another narration, sent him to the elderly Waraqa along with Abu Bakr. when the latter came to pay a visit (perhaps for a commercial affair)--and when the Prophet repeated to Waraqa what he had seen, he burst out exclaiming: "Holy of the Holiest! Holy of the Holiest! If you have not told me a lie, then this is like the experience of Moses on the Sinai Mountain and the Thora he had received there! If I were to live for some more time when you will be persecuted by your people by God, I shall stand by you to defend you". "Will they persecute me for this?" asked anxiously the Prophet, in all simplicity. Waraqa replied: "No prophet can remain unopposed."

52. Little by little he got calmed; then he began to find a delight in thinking of what had happened. then a desire and a nostalgia, so that the experience repeats itself; and then the increasing anxiety at the interruption, reaching, in three long years of waiting, to despair, especially when taunts added insult to injury. A most antipathetic old lady, none other than his own aunt, wife of the as antipathetic Abu Lahab, went so far as to remark: "Your Satan has abandoned you and is angry with you". For the first and last time he lost patience, and in verexcitement he left his house, mounted on a hill precise, and wanted to jump, to end the life of the unbearablerment, as narrates al-Bukhari. At that very moment Gabl reappeared, and said: No, you are the envoy of God, no doubt that, God has not abandoned you, only you cannot impose your will on God. And he communicated the following message:

By the mounting day!

And by the night when it has covered

(everything)!

Thy Lord hath not abandoned thee and doth not
datest either

And verily the Hereafter is better for thee than
the Present (life).

And verily thy Lord will accord thee, and thou
wilt be content.

Hath He not found thee an orphan and then
procured asylum?

And found thee erring and then He guided?

And found thee dependent, and then procured
independence?

As to the orphan, don't oppress (him).

As to the beggar, don't drive (him) away.

As to the bounty of thy Lord, talk of (it).

(Q. 93/1 - 11)

As to the bounty of thy Lord, talk of it"-- this was
the order to preach Belief and good work. What
"bounty" could be greater than guiding to the path
leading unto Him! Believing in God alone and rejecting
all else, this was the first pole; charity, generosity,
helping hand to the poor and weak, this was the other
pole, around which the Islamic sphere was to revolve.
And Muhammad began in right earnest to accomplish
the heavy task. A new religion begun.

CHAPTER 2

WHY A NEW RELIGION ?

53. Let us pause awhile, and meditate on the
question of why a new religion, when there were already
so many then in the world?

54. Religion is a necessity, at least for the nobler
spirits, even if not so for every human being. It alone
answers to the anxious questions of man : Who is my
creator? Why has He created me? Why am I going to be
after my death? And the like. even if few people make
this subject as the speciality of their life study and
research, the questions occur some time or other to
every mind during the life. They concern things
invisible, beyond all perception.

55. Since long, even if not since always, it has been
evident to man that, as he cannot be his own creator,
there must be Someone, beyond the couple of his
parents and grandparents Who had created the universe
of causes and effects. In spite of the fact that man could
not see Him, man has been perforce obliged to believe in
His existence as a Necessary Being (*wajib al-ujud*) Man
also soon discovered that not all his brother human
beings were alike gifted, not alike in moral conduct. Few
were those who were disinterestedly charitable, truthful
and scrupulous, whom their very nature seemed to
favour and protect in their "struggle in the path of God".
If the vested interest of the some hindered them from
following the guidance of these "messengers of God", an
ever-increasing number of masses was gradually won to
their cause, degenerating at times even in chauvinism.

The deterioration, occasioned by the degradation, required new efforts and renewed struggle, by persons of newer generations. Old records of humanity have not come down to us. From what has really come to the posterity, in the field of religion, we see that most of these guides said : I am the carrier of a message which God, your Lord, has revealed to me for being communicated to you.

56. In an interesting saying of the Prophet of Islam, quoted by Ibn al-'Arabi (*Futuhāt Makkiya*) : There have been one hundred thousand Adams, we being the children of the last of them. A more picturesque version says : Once Moses asked God : Show me some of Thy marvels. God asked him to go to a certain place. There was a pit, yet a desert, and none to talk with Moses threw a pebble in the pit, and from within came a voice : "Who are you?" Moses introduced himself by giving his genealogy upto Adam--and he was proud of knowing so much--but continued the invisible talker : "Which Adam? For every ten thousand years somebody comes and throws a pebble in this pit, and on question gives exactly the same name and genealogy as yours; and the pit is fast filling with these pebbles!"

57. Hundred thousand Adams! Humanity has vanished and reappeared hundred thousand times. Be it as it may Coming to our Adam, Islamic tradition attributes to him Divinely revealed Books, and a saying of Muhammad affirms that there have been 124,000 prophets since Adam, he himself being the last of them, and that all have taught the same eternal truths of the "uncity" of God and of life after death.

58. Of course we know nothing of the contents of the Books of Adam, or of his son Seth. The oldest record that has come down to us seems to have been regarding

Enoch, the prophet Idris, whom the Islamic tradition attributes the invention of writing. So according to the *Letter of Jude*, in the New Testament, vv. 14-15.

"And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying : Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of saints, to execute judgement upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly needed which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoke against him".

Christian commentators have found in it the prediction of someone to come. Yet the rest of the teaching of Enoch has been completely lost to us.

59. Of the religions, extant at the time of Muhammad, Zoroastrianism, Brahmanism, Buddhism, Sabeanism, Judaism and Christianity were perhaps the more important, more easily accessible to the Meccans and could be taken as revealed religions, superior to man-made cults of idolatry and atheism. Why none of these satisfied the honest mind of Muhammad ?

Zoroastrianism

60. Of the then-extant religions, Zoroastrianism was perhaps the oldest. Its adepts were not found in Mecca, yet they were numerous in the Eastern and Southern Arabia, where Meccan caravans frequently went for trade. The Book of Zoroaster, Avesta, in the original Zend language, had disappeared. Even its commentary of later days in Pazend language, whose fragments alone have come down to us, seems to have been largely neglected, and even destroyed in the religious wars between his religion and that of Mazdak.

Zoroaster may have taught belief in Ahura-Mazda, in One God, but Arabs knew him as the founder of dualism and khavedhvagdas (or pious incest : the marriage with sister, mother and daughter was considered more meritorious and charitable than with strangers). This may or may not have been the original teaching of this religion, but it had degenerated, early in 7th century, to the worship of fire, belief in two gods, one of good and the other of evil, with an eternal struggle between the two.

61. One can understand his attitude without admitting it. Zoroaster's respect to God did not permit him to envisage that the evil could be created by God. But the supposition of a different creator of evil implied Dualism, with a civil war between the two Gods, wherein the God of good was generally the vanquished. Again it is possible to please a Creator indirectly by praising His work. In his time nothing was more powerful than fire, which consumed and destroyed everything and, therefore, could serve as the symbol of the omnipotence of God Almighty. Respect shown to fire was, in his mind, showing respect to the creator of fire. But that was idolatry; even the worst and most primitive idolater does not believe that his handiwork is his God, but only a symbol, a representation of some attribute or manifestation of God. Marriage with very near relatives has been abhorred by all humanity since all times. Islamic tradition says, that even Adam, the first man, whose wife ordinarily gave birth to twins, married the girl of one birth with her brother of another birth, and not with the twin brother, and in later generations one preferred cousins and remoter relatives to full brothers, and so on. It is surmised that if marriage had to take place between brother and sister of the twin birth, humanity would remain immobile as any other birds and quadrupeds, and twin births would become normal.

Whereas human intelligence and progress and due to cross-breeding, to marriage with remoter relatives. Be it as it may, the khavedhvagdas of the Zoroastrians (Majus, Parsis, Mazdaists) was considered as an innovation which was to be despised, leading to the condemnation of the whole religion. Their method of slaughtering animals was also repugnant to Arabs.

62. Modern research shows that Zoroaster believed in One God, believed angels and the Divine revelation to His elect, in Paradise and the like. In the extant fragments of Zend-Avesta (yasht 13, XXVIII, 129), he predicts the coming of an iconoclast, whose name would be Soeshyant (the Mercy-unto-All), and also Astvat create (one who raises people).

Brahmanism (Hinduism).

63. There is no direct mention of the Indian Brahmanism in the Quran. And in fact, in the time of the Prophet, there was a life and death struggle between this and its rival religion, Buddhism. The Prophet did know Indians, but whether he had also known elements of their religion is hard to affirm. In the Quranic story of the golden calf of the Jews, it is said that the fabricator was a certain goldsmith Samiri (and not the prophet Aaron as the Bible asserts), and there is mention in this connection of the untouchability (Quran 20/85-97). Both these are features of Brahmanism. Samiris are a group of their chiefs, and if cow-worship is their particularity, so is also the inhuman notion of untouchability of people of other religions. Further the Quran speaks (26/196) of Zubur al-auwalin (Books of the Ancients). As is well-known, the Brahmanist Hindus have a number of religious books, which they affirm as being of divine revelation; of these the Purana (which literally means the Old Books). Lastly, there is a very

curious similarity between the story of the prophet Abraham and the story of the Indian prince Rama. Abraham was banished by his father, and when he arrived with his wife Sarah in Egypt, the local king, an immoral tyrant, forcefully took her to his palace; miracles saved her honour and she returned to Abraham accompanied by royal gifts, including his daughter Hagar (mother of Ishmael). According to the Bible, Abraham was originally called Ab-Ram, and God gave him the title Ab-Raham (father of nations). The Indian prince Rama was also banished by his father at the instigation of his second wife, stepmother of Rama, and when he was passing his time in a forest, the king of Ceylon got amorous of his wife Sita and kidnapped her. Sita too saved her honour, and could later prove that through the ordeal of fire, from which she came out safe. (of Abraham's escape from the fire). Apart from the Purana, another group of Brahmnist books is called Veda, and their author is Brahma, the God. The Books of Abraham are mentioned in the Quran, and resemblance between Abraham and Brahma is striking. Often I put to myself the question whether the Book of the Wars of the Lord, referred to in the Bible (Numbers 21/24) should not be searched in the Mahabharata and the Geeta contained therein?

64. Be it as it may, the Brahmanists, although they believe in One God, worship also the manifestations of God, be that His creatures or His attributes. According to them, there are 400 millions of gods--gods more numerous than the number of their adorers!--and the cow is like the president of this divine company. If they worship animals (like the Naga-serpant and Hanuman-monkey), they worship trees, stones, rivers, sources, confluents, sun, moon and countless other things also. Further they represent science, death, wealth etc in sculpture and adore these statues.

65. The most important fact is that this religion is reserved to a "family", and no one may be converted to Hinduism (Brahmanism): one must be born in a Hindu family to be a Hindu. A characteristic feature of this religion is the belief in the avagon (tanasukh, metempsychosis). For one wanted a universal religion, for the entire humanity, Brahmanism was out of question.

66. Like other previous religions, Brahmanism also waits for someone yet to come. For instance in the book called Atharva Veda, his name is given as Narashansah astivishyate i.e. the praised one who will be applauded; his carriage will be drawn by camels, so swift that they will touch the heaven, etc. In the book called Vishnu Purana, chapter 24, it is said that when the practices taught by the Vedas (books of true knowledge) and the institutes of law shall nearly have ceased to exist, and the end of the dark ages will be close, the last incarnation of God will take place in the form of a warrior, who will be born in the Sambhla Dib (island of sand), in an eminent family, his father's name would be Vishnuyasa (slave of God), and the mother would be called Somti (worthy of confidence), etc.

Budhism

67. Budhism began as a protest against the idol-worship of the Hindu Brahmanism. It was an iconoclastic reform, not a new and complete religion. So it retained many a feature of the other religion, such as metempsychosis. It preaches charity, renunciation of the world, and meditation by which the true knowledge comes of itself to man. It is said that the founder of the religion, Budha Shakyamuni was the son of Suddhodana, king of Kapila-Vastu. One day when he saw a funeral procession, he was so much touched that

he left the house and the family as a wandering monk, and one day he received the enlightenment when sitting under the shadow of a savage fig tree. He has left no book, yet his sayings have been recorded by his disciples and have come down to us. He is silent about God, and insists on ascetism and self-mortification. Although he preached breaking all idols, the sculpturing images of Buddha, and the over-scrupulous Buddhists did not dare to commit profanation by breaking the statue of their venerated master. So Buddhism had become to all appearance as idolatrous as any other idolatrous religion, and it is the statue of Buddha that had become the object of worship.

68. This religion having spread over large parts of India and China, did constitute one of the big religions of the time of the Prophet. There is no direct mention of it in the Quran or the Hadith. Yet several old and new commentators of the Quran have thought that the fig tree (mentioned in the surat 95, verse 1) may refer to the Bodi tree of the revelation of Buddha; his birth place Kapila-Vastu is supposed to have given the name of the prophet Dhu'l-Kifi (the one from Kifi, i.e. from Kapila). As a matter of fact there are no details about this prophet, mentioned twice in the Quran, either in the Quran, or the Hadith or the rest of the Islamic literature.

69. A religion of the idol worship and of obligatory renunciation of the world could not attract masses, asceticism being reserved for a handful of humanity only.

70. Curiously, Buddha has also said that he has not completed the religion but that a Maitreya (variant : Metteya) i.e. Mercy-unto-All is yet to come. (of The Gospel of Buddha).

71. The Quran mentions the name of this religion, but without much details, and the context shows that it was based on some revealed book. May be that of the prophet Noah, as the modern Sabeans pretend. The original of this book is no more in existence, a resume of its contents is traditionally preserved and circulates in the community. It is said that they worshipped stars, and believed in their influence. Temples in seven countries were attributed to the seven planets. According to al-Mas'udi, Sabeans believed that the temple in Mecca, the Ka'ba, was under the direct influence of Saturn (Zuhl) which meant the eternity.

Judaism

72. Of all the older religions, the Quran speaks much of Judaism, (religion brought by the prophet Moses), and recognizes the Jewish Thora as the divinely inspired book. Muslim and Jews both being monotheists, there has been no polemic among them on this subject. Even more, the Quran recognizes explicitly, and several times, that God had given the Jews excellence over all other peoples, naturally for the duration of the prophethood of Moses, and naturally also so long as they abide by their religious laws. So the humiliation (and persecutions) of which the Jews were object, in the time of Muhammad all over the world, have been attributed by the Quran to the fact that they constantly violated divine laws.

73. To such a people the only thing that a new prophet could say was, firstly that their own. Divinely revealed book predicted the arrival of a last prophet--and the Jews of that time were eagerly awaiting his arrival--and secondly that their religious book has not been well preserved. In fact the fate of the Thora has been sad : first Nebukhodonossor, and then Antiochus, Titus and

others destroyed it wantonly several times to the last copy, and it was from memory, and after a hundred and more years, that it was tried to restore it. Modern Western scholarship has found that there are still confusions, amalgamations and many an incongruity in the extant text.

74. As to the prediction of a prophet like Moses, it is contained in the following terms :

"I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren like unto thee (O Moses), and will put My words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him."

(Deuteronomy 18/18)

That is to say, the Jewish religion was essentially correct, but it was out-dated, a bit harsh too; and that the Jews themselves recognized that and expected the arrival of a new and last prophet, who would bring from God a new and more lenient law.

Christianity

75. Of all the religions, Muhammad found Christianity the most sympathetic, although with certain serious reservations. The Quran voluntarily admits that Jesus was the Word of God, the Spirit of God, he was the Christ (*masih*, the anointed), the messenger of God and--what no other religion in the world has conceded to the Christians--was born spotlessly of a virgin, with no father, as a miracle showing the omnipotence of God. Further, it recognizes that God has revealed to Jesus a book, the Gospel. Yet the trinity, the use of the term Son of God, the Mariolatry (worship of Mary, by certain sects) had to the spirit of Muhammad the connotation of idolatry. The

Quran (9/31) makes the serious attack that the Christians have adopted their priests for Lords (*arbab*), which word is explained in a hadith as the legislators, who make and unmake divinely revealed law. In fact the history of the church and its numerous councils and syndos cannot escape this reproach. Jesus had in very clear and emphatic terms declared (St Matthew 5/17-19) that he had not at all come to abolish the Thora and the books of other prophets (in the Bible), but to fulfil them, and that whosoever would break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, would be the most lowly in the sight of God. Nevertheless St Paul not only taught (Romans 10/4) : "Christ is the end of the Thora", but went so far as to affirm (The Acts of the Apostles 15/28) :

"For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things : That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication : from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well"

Pork and wine were thus allowed, Sabbath and circumcision were abolished, and all the numerous prescriptions of the Thora abandoned. This was in the life-time of the companions of Jesus. Later on, trinity was instituted, Jesus was declared to be God, of the same substance as his father, cross was adopted for cult, icons and images were introduced with fervour, and so on and so forth.

76. There is also some reason to believe that, in the mind of Muhammad, Jesus--the real Jesus--had limited himself to the "lost sheep of the House of Israel" (of St Matthew 10/6; Quran 3/48-9), and who even refused to "throw the children's bread to dogs" (St

Matthew 15/24/-6). Muhammad wanted something more universal, a "mercy unto the worlds".

77. As to the Gospel, revealed by God to Jesus, Jesus wanted not or could not dictate to his disciples for being put to writing and preserved for posterity. Parts of it remained in the memories of his handful of disciples. When these and their successors and followers later wrote their memoirs or biographies of Jesus, they gave them the name Gospel. Over seventy of them are known, though only four of them have been accepted by the Church, and the rest declared as apocryphal. Naturally between these several biographies there are contradictions also. The original in the Aramaic language has also vanished, and it is only the Greek translation which possess.

78. Even in these biographies, contained in the New Testament, there are quotations from the speeches of Jesus--his mission did not last for more than three years, and he knew that the end was approaching--and he also sadly yet clearly predicted the coming of someone else to complete what he had not been able to do :

"Nevertheless I tell you the truth : It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin... I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth : for the shall not speak of himself; but whatever he shall hear (from God), that shall he speak, and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me : for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto

you."

(St. John 16/7 - 14)

79. We have seen above; that according to the Hindu scriptures, the last manifestation of God, the last incarnation of Him, would take the form of a warrior. The reason is explained by Jesus (Matthew 21/33-41, St Mark 12/1 - 9, St Luke 20/9 - 16) in a parable and we quote the words of St Mark.

"And he began to speak unto them by parables. A certain man planted a vineyard, and set a hedge about it, and digged a place for the winefat and built a tower and let it out to husbandmen and went into a far country. And at the season he sent to the husbandmen a servant, that he might receive from the husbandmen of the fruit of the vineyard. And they caught him, and beat him, and sent him away empty. And again he sent unto them another servant; and at him they cast stones, and wounded him in the head, and sent him away shamefully handled. And again he sent another; and him they killed, and many others; beating some and killing some. Having yet therefore one son, his well-beloved, he sent him also last unto them, saying : They will reverence my son. But those husbandmen said among themselves : This is the heir; come let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours. And they took him, and killed him, and cast him out of the vineyard. What shall therefore the lord of vineyard do? He will come and destroy the husbandmen, and will give the vineyard unto others."

The lord of the vineyard is the Lord of the world, the

servants sent one after the other are the prophets, the son is Jesus, and the commander of the invading army is the "prophet of war".

80. This brief expose on the real situation of various religions in the time of the Prophet, shows that none of them could satisfy fully his mind. His thirst for something better was daily increasing. It was in these circumstances that he began receiving revelations which gradually completed the edifice of Islam.

81. But let events tell their own story.

CHAPTER 3

THE CALL AND ITS ESSENTIALS

82. When Muhammad received the second revelation, assuring him that God had not abandoned him--just the contrary, it was He who had guided Muhammad when he was erring--and ordered him that "of the bounty of God should be (his) discourse" (Q. 93/11), he forgot all his sorrow and human doubts, and gave himself with heart and soul to the Divine Call which he was commissioned. Although the call gradually developed into a complete system of the out look on life, its basic point never changed : **Laailaaha illallaah Muhammad rasool'ullah**, i.e. there is no God if not God Himself, Muhammad is the messenger of God.

83. In a nutshell, it meant that God is the Legislator and Muhammad is the intermediary to communicate the will of the transcendent God to the world, to the humanity in particular. There is only one God, and it is He who has created us, who nourishes us, who gives us death, who would demand of us the account of our worldly life in order to reward, punish or pardon as He may will. Man is the creature of God, so he must obey the orders of his Master, in all walks of his life, be that dogmas, cult, social behaviour or else. If not, God is All-Powerful, and He is capable of punishing us by even resuscitating us after death.

84. Belief in God and in the Hereafter, such are the two poles around which rotates the religion that Muhammad began preaching. God is a necessary being,

transcendent and beyond human perception. So it was indispensable that He select someone to serve as intermediary, as messenger, to transmit to us his will. Hence the necessity of a prophet. A sanction was also necessary to deter from wilful disobedience, A few remarks seem to be called for.

Belief in the Messenger

85. To submit to the commandments of our creator and master, every believer in God agrees to it without discussion or hesitation; yet how to know His will is the problem, since He is transcendent and beyond human perception. All agree that this is impossible for man unless God Himself makes us know what His will is. Practically all religions seem to agree that if instinct suffices for other animals, for the *hayawan natiq* (*homo sapiens*) as man is, instinct alone does not suffice, since he does not act mechanically, but reasons according to his lights. Hence the difference between the reactions of different human individuals. As a reasonable being, man agrees if he is convinced--be that by his own reasoning or at the argument of his fellow beings--and changes even his former decision, unless strong prejudices prevent him from doing that. His confidence also prompts him to prefer the opinion of his well-wisher friend to his own. A child obeys its mother, then the obedience is transferred, for different reasons, from the mother to the father, from the father to the teacher, from the teacher to the ruler, to the spiritual guide, etc. A sanction is in the background. When the corrections coming from the mother to the disobedient child do not suffice, father steps in, followed by the school teacher and the hierarchy culminating in the head of the State who possesses power of life and death. But this sanction suffices for the outward acts only. The spiritual guide reforms the inner disposition of the

spirit, and the most potential sanction that the spiritual guide makes to play its role is the Fear of God, who is capable of resuscitating even after death, and punishing the disobedient.--fear, not of the tyranny and oppression but of the very strict justice of God, for if God were to take account rigourously, nobody can escape ("not even I, unless the mercy of God covers me", as Muhammad has said of himself). The highest kind of the spiritual guide is the messenger of God Himself.

86. All seem to agree that a man of the noblest spiritual caliber is chosen by God, to receive His message and to transmit it to others. But the nature of the tie between God and His messenger has been variously interpreted. Some religions, Zoroastrianism, Brahmanism among others, call the chosen man as an incarnation (*hulul*) : it is God who is embodied in the flesh of this human being. Brahmanist Hindus call him an *avatar*, i.e. coming down (of the deity), God residing in this chosen man. Some Christian sects like the Monophysites call him simply God. The inconvenience is that these incarnates require to live as other ordinary human beings, eating and drinking, sleeping and suffering from all ailments, even dying like all mortals, sometimes as martyrs. That God should be helpless and should die, is inadmissible to reason. That a man annihilates his ego and is absorbed, by the grace of God, in the will of God (*fana fi'llah*) is a possibility, accessible to every sincere traveller in the mystic path to God; but the dignity of being the messenger of God is very much higher and more restricted. Every *wali* (saint) can be annihilated in God, but not every one annihilated in Him can be His messenger. Hence the other group of religions who call this elect of God "a prophet" (*nabiy*).

87. There is some difference between the Jewish

and Islamic notions of the "prophet" :

88. A reader of the Bible (the Old Testament) is bewildered at the loose use of the word in various passages. God tells the king Abimelech in a dream "Abraham is a prophet, hand him back his wife, he will pray for thee" (Genesis 20/7). "The Lord said unto Moses : See, I have made thee god to Pharaoh, and Aaron, thy brother, shall be thy prophet (Exodus 7/1). "And Moses... gathered seventy men of the elders of the people, and set them round about the tabernacle. And the Lord came down in a cloud, and speak unto him and took of the spirit that was upon him and gave it unto the seventy elders; and... they prophesied and did not cease. But there remained two of the men in the camp--(Eldad and Medad)--and they prophesied in the camp... And Joshua... said : My lord, Moses, forbid them. And Moses said unto him : Enviest thou for my sake? Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put His spirit upon them" (Numbers 11/24-29. Of Ibn Hanbal, Shakir's ed. No 2546, 2692). Moses told the Israelites : "And the Lord said unto me : ...I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put My words in his mouth..." (Deuteronomy 18/17-18). "And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses" (Deuteronomy 34/10). "And all Israel... knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the Lord" (I Samuel 3/20). "... for he that is now called a prophet, was before time called a seer" (I Samuel 9/9). During a foreign invasion, the prophet Samuel chose Saul son of Kish as king, and asked him to go somewhere : "After that thou shalt come to the hill of God, where is the garrison of the Philistines : and it shall come to pass, when thou art come thither to the city, that thou shalt meet a company of prophets coming down from the high place with a psaltery, and a tabret, and a pipe, and a

harp, before them, and they shall prophesy. And the spirit of the Lord will come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them, and shalt be turned into another man" (I Samuel 10/5-6, of 10-11). "...And David fled, and escaped that night. Saul also sent messengers unto David's house to watch him, and to slay him in the morning..

And David...came to Samuel to Ramah...And it was told Saul :.... David is...in Ramah. And Saul sent messengers to take David. And when they saw the company of the prophets prophesying, and Samuel standing as appointed over them, the spirit of God was upon the messengers of Saul, and they also prophesied. And when it was told Saul, he sent other messengers, and they prophesied likewise. And Saul sent messengers again the third time, and they prophesied also. Then went he also to Ramah...and the spirit of God was upon him also, and he went on, and prophesied until he came to Naioth in Ramah. And he stripped off his clothes also, and prophesied before Samuel in like manner, and lay down naked all that day and all that night. Wherefore they say : Is Saul also among the prophets?" (I Samuel 19/10-24). An old prophet disobeys God, and is therefore slain by a lion (I Kings, 13/11-24). The idolatrous king Ahab was seeking the prophet Elijah to kill him. Elijah met accidentally the governor of the royal palace and told him to inform the king where Elijah was. Being a God-fearing man, the governor hesitates and says : "Was it not told, my lord (Elijah), what I did when Jazebel slew the prophets of the Lord, how I hid an hundred men of the Lord's prophets by fifty in a cave, and fed them with bread and water? (Elijah insists. The king comes, and Elijah orders him) : Now therefore send and gather to me all Israel unto mount Carmel, and the prophets of Baal four hundred and fifty, and the prophets of groves four hundred

which eat at Jezebel's table" (I Kings, 18/13-19). "Moreover David and the captains of the host separated to the service of the sons of Asaph, and of Heman, and of Jeduthun, who should prophesy with harps, with psalteries, and with cymbals" (I Chronicles 25/1). "The priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink, they are swallowed up of wine, they are out of the way through strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble in judgement." (Isaiah 28/7). "... and the prophets prophesied by Baal, and walked after things that do not profit" (Jeremiah 2/8). "The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priest bear rule by their means; and My people love to have it so; and what will ye do in the end thereof?" (Jeremiah 5/31). The prophet Jeremiah says: "Then the Lord said unto me: The prophets prophesy lies in My name: I sent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither speak unto them: they prophesy unto you a false vision and divination..." (Jeremiah 14/14). "And by a prophet the Lord brought Israel out of Egypt, and by a prophet was he preserved" (Hosea 12/13). The prophet Amos says: "...I am no prophet, neither am I a prophet's son: but I am an herdsman and a gatherer of sycomore fruit" (Amos 7/14). "And thou, child (i.e. John-Baptist), shalt be called the prophet of the Highest" (St Luke, 1/76). "... Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet..." (St. Luke, 24/19).

89. One is simply lost when trying to understand what, according to the Bible, a prophet really is. Abraham, and Moses, John-Baptist and Jesus are prophets, and also those that speak lies; even those who affirm: "I am not a prophet"!

90. According to the Quran, a prophet is the most pious person, also most obedient to God. He receives revelations and messages from God, either through an

angel or even directly inculcated upon his heart. These revealed messages are sometimes compiled in the form of a code of law. Sometimes an ancient Book is abrogated and replaced by a new one, and sometimes a prophet continues to follow the Book of his predecessor. Naturally one who has a Book is superior to the one who does not have it, but as a messenger of God, all the equal. The Quran uses several synonymous terms indifferently: *nabiy* (prophet), *rasul* (messenger), *mursal* (envoy), *bashir* and also *mubashshir* (announcer of good tidings), *nadhir* and also *mundhir* (warner), *hadi* (guide). Any of these titles can be applied to any and everyone of the prophets, from Adam down to Muhammad.

91. The Quran and the Hadith say that Muhammad is the last of the prophets.

Belief in the Hereafter

92. Psychologically speaking the belief in the resurrection and Last Judgement of God constitute a most efficacious means of persuasion and dissuasion to man. There are angelic men who require neither promise nor warning, and always accomplish their duty scrupulously; their number is small. Others, devilish men, who in spite of all supervision try to outrage society and violate rules of conduct; they too are very few. The immense majority of human beings consists of those who behave correctly when they are supervised, and the promise of reward and threat of punishment also have more or less effect on their conduct. It is for them that all religions, all laws are meant. Material sanctions are no doubt good, but temptation is great when one knows that he cannot be detected, to whose he is too powerful to be punished by the law court (for instance the ruler of the country). The existence of the Divine judgement

after resurrection deters even the most powerful ruler, if he is a believer. Just as one prays even when there is none to oblige him to do that, so also one pays his tax even when the finance ministry commits an error. Islam employs both the sanctions : the police will be ready there, and it will at the same time be inculcated upon the spirit that one has to give account, after death, to God our Almighty Lord. A double sanctions, supervising both our mind and body, will of course be more efficacious than a single one, be that purely material or purely spiritual. It goes without saying that the conviction, created by the spiritual sanction, is the more powerful of the two; and it is the only available means when there is no possibility of the material supervision, as will be the case for a prophet in the beginning of his mission, when he has to go against the notions of the entire population. No wonder then that the earliest suras of the Quran are full of reference to the life after death, the Last Judgement and the Hereafter.

Salat or Service of Worship

93. Practice is the most convincing preacher of a precept. We have seen above that the first thing Gabriel taught Muhammad was the ablutions and the prayer or service of the worship of God. The prophet could ask : "You spend the 24 hours of your day in work or rest, yet all for your own self; how much time do you reserve for demonstrating your gratitude and your submission to your God?" He gave to his audience his personal example before demanding them to do something. Every religion, even the idolatry has its cult; let us pause for a moment to see what are the characteristics of the Islamic cult ('ibada) :

94. Ablutions are described by the Prophet to the half of the faith, and for good reason. Islam aspires at

the well being Here and in the Hereafter. It must prescribe things which are simultaneously useful for the body and the soul : an apparently worldly thing must have spiritual utility also, and an apparently spiritual duty must not be devoid of temporal advantages. Ablutions mean cleanliness of body and dress, and there is no need of emphasizing their hygienic and social importance. But their symbolic importance should not be lost sight of. One washes first one's privy parts, and then washes the hands, the mouth, the nostrils, the face, the arms, the head, the ears and the feet. These are organs of all our sins and crimes : sexual intercourse, writing, taking, smelling, abusing the influence by our face (presence), beating, meditating, hearing and marching--in a manner that is illicit -- these are the principal things we do with these organs. Washing them implies regret for the past and resolution of not doing the same in future, and all this by seeking help from God. If regret-resolution is half of the faith, the other half is to abide by this resolution and to try to repair the damage of the past in so far as it is possible.

95. The Parsis worship Fire, and the Hindus have the same attitude with regard to Cow. They want apparently thereby to praise God indirectly : An artist is pleased when I tell him that he is a proficient master, and he is as much flattered if I tell him nothing at all but just remark and exclaim, "what a nice picture!" Fire is the most powerful manifestation of the irresistible power of god, and Cow that of the beneficence of God. The prayer in Buddhism consists of standing in meditation. The Jews recite part of the Thora, word of God, which fact seems to symbolize that : God is present everywhere, we are blind and do not see Him, yet aspire to reach Him. It is by word that one can direct a blind man, and by following the word of the Lord we can reach near the speaker. To use a more modern metaphor : the

word of the transcendent God is above sound and language; if we take it to be like the electric current, which is invisible and of course has no colour, but it illuminates and takes the same colour as that of the bulb which is connected with the electric current. Bulbs are the prophets, and the word of God is revealed in the colour, that is in the language of the prophet. By travelling through the current one can reach the generator of that current. Orthodox and Catholic Christians have retained the Jewish practice of reading the Word of God, and have added thereto the communion: By consuming some bread and some wine, in memory of the Last Supper of Jesus, they mean participating in the personality of Jesus, becoming one with him (and Jesus meaning God).

96. The Quran (17/44) affirms: "there is not a thing but hymneth His praise". The stars, the mountains, the trees, the animals (of 22/18), the birds flying in rank and file (24/41), even the thunder (13/13), even the expanding and receding shadow (16/48) and water (8/11) which serves for purification (ablution), none is excluded. Things in the world are divisible in three kingdoms: mineral, animal and vegetable. Muslim prayer consists of standing like the mountain (mineral), inclining like the animals, and prostrating like the plant whose mouths are their roots. There is the loud glorification of God like the thunder (Allahu Akbar, i.e. God is great) there are cycles of the same acts (rak'ats) like the revolution of stars, there is lengthening and shortening like the shadow, and so on. There is also the recitation of the Quran, word of God. There is the reception of the faithful in the very presence of the Omnipresent, so real and so close that he exchanges salutations with the Lord (tashahhud, at-tahiyaatu lillaah, salutations to God etc.) as would do the Prophet himself during his highest ascension (mi'raj). It is a

synthesis of the prayers of all the beings in the universe and even of all the religions, with something particularly Islamic.

97. Other spiritual duties, fasting etc., will come later. In the beginning there were two daily prayers, morning and afternoon; the night vigil (tahajjud) were the practice of the Prophets, for others they were not obligatory.

CHAPTER 4

The Preaching and its Immediate Consequences

98. The preaching of Islam began naturally at home : the wife, the children, the domestic and the adopted children (Zaid and 'Ali) were the more easily won to the new religion, since they knew that the Prophet never lied, but was always disinterestedly at the service of others in charity. Then came the intimate friends, Abu Bakr in particular, who in his turn became the most enthusiastic and efficient missionary : a considerable number of young men in the town embraced Islam through his efforts; and he spent his money also by purchasing and liberating slaves who were persecuted by their masters for having embraced Islam. Thereafter came the question of the relatives and tribesmen of the Prophet; and that was the most difficult job. Their conversion was necessary to reply to the eventual taunt : "Oh, his relatives, who know him better, have not responded to his call"; and unlike the youth--always rebellious--the elderly people are always most conservative and hard to win. The chief of the tribe, Abu-Talib, his uncle, loved him very much, yet it was not easy for his pride to submit to his senior, his own nephew, for abandoning such a serious thing as the ancestral religion. Next in rank was Abu-Lahab, another uncle. For personal reasons he was most antipathetically disposed towards Muhammad, as we have had the occasion to describe (CI § 13 supra). If Abu-Talib simply abstained from responding to the call, Abu-Lahab became active to oppose it with all possible means. If Muhammad talked of his doctrines in the assembly of

relatives, Abu-Lahab spoiled everything by his taunts and insults; if he talked outside, the ubiquitous Abu-Lahab was no less obnoxious.

99. Thinking that the prejudices or hesitations of the relatives would one day vanish, he turned to the general public in the town. He was more successful with the youth (of teenagers and those in their twenties) than with elderly people).

100. This created unexpected problems : the indifference of the elders turned into active hostility when their own young children and other near relatives were won over to Islam. So when young men of the local nobility, like Firas ibn an-Nadr, Abu-Hudhaifa ibn 'Utba, Hisham ibn al-'As, al-Walid ibn al-Walid etc. enthusiastically joined the Muslim community, their fathers found it an insult to their dignity; and not only did they persecute their children, but also came into open conflict with the Prophet in his sacred work. The lot of slaves, men and women, was naturally very much the worse, and there was no question of pity for them unlike the case of one's own child. The affirmation that idolaters would go to Hell was enough to excite resentment; but when it was declared that even their fore-fathers were doomed to the same Divine punishment, the filial amourpropre naturally could not support that. But the resentment on this score was childish : was the Prophet not condemning equally his own ancestors?

101. As time passed, the news gradually spread far and wide, beyond the limits of the town. More so since the Prophet had the habit of profiting by the Hajj assembly when contingents of all parts of Arabia thronged in and around Mecca. Curiosity attracted many a stranger :

102. Abu Dharr was once a highway robber. One day his conscience pricked him when he heard the cries and curses of his innocent victims, women and children. He repented, and by a strange coincidence came to know at that very time that there is a movement for better morality at Mecca. From Badr, he came the long way to Mecca, embraced Islam, and, at the behest of the Prophet, returned to his own region to preach there the new religion.

103. A Yemenite was so much terrified by the anti-Islamic propaganda of the Meccan pagans, that he had pressed pieces of cloth in his ears not to be contaminated by the magical speeches of the Prophet, when in Mecca. But soon he began to blame himself for this foolish and negative attitude and said : What harm if I hear him? I am intelligent enough to judge for myself. The simple and reasonable doctrines of Islam impressed him so much that he finished by embracing it. So too did some Abyssinians, traders probably, who had come to Mecca.

104. The case of Hamza, his young uncle, constitutes another category : One day when he returned home from a hunting errand in the desert, his maid-servant related to him that Abu-Jahl was particularly harsh on that day to his nephew, Muhammad, doing this and that, Hamza found it an insult to him and to the family. He went straight to Abu-Jahl and without talking a word, struck him with his bow, wounding him grievously, and added : I have embraced Islam, Prompted by your injustice.

105. Another category is represented by 'Umar, the future caliph. He was in his late twenties, and was extremist in his likes and dislikes. Without caring to know what Islam really stood for, he was vehement in persecuting Muslims, be they in his family or outside.

One day he resolved to murder the Prophet, in order to uproot the cause of the trouble once for all. Well armed for the task, he began seeking where the Prophet on that day was En route he met a relative of his, whom he confided his resolution. This person was already a secret convert to Islam, and knew that argument was impossible with 'Umar when he had already made up his mind to do something. so he said : 'Umar, first set your own house in order, before risking a war with the tribe of Muhammad, for your own sister and her husband your brother-in-law have also become Muslims. The unexpected news enraged him so much that he forgot everything else and went straight to the house of his sister. At the door he overheard the psalmody of the Quran, proof enough of the correctness of the news. He knocked at the door so furiously that the people inside were terrified : the teacher of the Quran was hastily concealed somewhere in the house, and the brother-in-law opened the door. "What were you singing?" he asked angrily. "Nothing, we were talking", came the reply. The rage was increased, and 'Umar gave a blow to his brother-in-law. The sister intervened, but bled with an unintentional wound. 'Umar was too noble to hurt a woman, particularly his own beloved sister. He was overwhelmed with sorrow. A coup de grace came from his sister, who roared like a wounded lioness : "Yes, we have embraced Islam, do whatever you like!" Softened to the utmost, he politely demanded her sister kindly to show him the text that they were singing. The sister was still burning with rage, so she said: "You are a pagan, a filth, you cannot touch those holy leaves!" "I am no more an enemy of your religion, do explain to me how can one touch them?" said he. She replied curtly : "Go, first take a bath to cleanse yourself.. 'Umar did that promptly and the family began of cherish hopes, and forgot and forgave all that had happened. When 'Umar returned from the bath room, the sister gave him some

chapters of the Quran.

On reading, 'Umar was so much touched by contents that he said : "What do you do to embrace Islam?" That teacher who had hid in terror, came out and said : "A day or two ago the Prophet had prayed to God in distress : 'My Lord, aid me by the conversion of Abu-Jahl or of 'Umar', and I hope that you are the happy beneficiary of this noble prayer. Come with me, I shall take you to the Prophet", (who was hiding in the house of al-Arqam, a zealous yet unostentatious convert). When people there heard the voice of 'Umar, they got frightened, yet the Prophet said : "Don't be afraid, he is alone and you are so many." When 'Umar stepped in, the Prophet "shook him violently and said : "How long will you err, O 'Umar?" 'Umar, in reply, pronounced the profession of the faith. It was so unexpected that the group shouted in joy the cry of *Allahu-Akbar* (God is great). People in the neighbourhood were astonished as to what had happened inside the calm house. 'Umar proposed : "The pagans pray openly, why should WE do that in secrecy?" Soon a whole procession went to the compound of the Ka'ba, headed by 'Umr, and prayed publicly. The presence of 'Umar was enough to prevent all untoward incidents. After the prayer, the group returned as calmly.

106. Not only the younger members of families and slaves, but also the clients or adopted brothers (*maula*) were victims of their pagan patrons, 'Ammar ibn Yasir of Yemenite origin and affiliated to the tribe of Makhzum (to which Abu-Jahl also belonged) is a case. He was so much tortured that he used to lose senses, and would say anything demanded of him to escaped the unbearable persecution. On such an occasion he came weeping to the Prophet and said how he was forced to pronounce blasphemy. The Prophet replied : "No matter, so long as

your inner conviction is unchanged." Pamikh (alias Sumaiya), the old mother of 'Ammar could naturally not bear the torture of her son; she once cursed and insulted Abu-Jahl; who enraged thrust his lance into the poor lady's abdomen and killed her. The name Pamikh (Pamuk, in modern Turkish) suggests that she might have been a Turk. The first lady martyr in Islam, she is said to have hailed from Kaskar (more precisely from Zandward).

107. Personal annoyances were not less to Muhammad himself. Thorn and filth were thrown on his door and in the lane where his house was, particularly when he returned late in the night; and the streets were not lit. Or when he prayed in the compound of the Ka'ba, and fell in prostration, these mischief-mongers placed heavy stones or abdomens of the immolated animals on his back or the head. And so on and so forth.

108. Human nature is a mystery and reactions of individuals are not alike. Rukana was a professional wrestler in Mecca. He is said to have been so strong that if he stood on a skin, and several persons pulled it, the skin tore up but Rukana remained unshaken. One day he went to the Prophet and said : "If you throw me down, I shall believe that you are a prophet." According to some reports, he even betted a third of his flock of sheep. He was not satisfied with one defeat, he desired repetition, and when thrice the Prophet threw him down consecutively, he began weeping and said : "What can I say to my wife for the loss of all the sheep?" The Prophet magnanimously returned to him his cattle but he, instead of any good impression, ran to the assembly of the pagan Meccans and told them : "Don't do any harm to Muhammad, keep him in store : if ever you have to contest with a foreign tribe, you can tell them that

you have a magician unsurpassed by any other. By God! Muhammad does such wonders. He is the greatest magician that exists".

109 Abu-Jahl had another sort of complex. Once he said : I know that what Muhammad says is right. But for merely whenever his tribe made some charity, we did as much, when it gave lavish feasts, we also did so, and at every act of grandeur we were a match for them; now they take pride by saying : "But we have a prophet among us", how can we procure a prophet among our tribe? No, I shall never admit that Muhammad is a prophet!

110. Nobler characters were also not wanting. Whenever street boys relentlessly pursued Muhammad in the town, threw on him stones etc., and if he happened to be near the house of Abu-Sufyan, he found there a ready asylum, and Abu-Sufyan, chased out these urchins; and when these dispersed, the Prophet could pursue his way. One day the base and cowardly Abu-Jahl saw little Fatima, the daughter of the Prophet, and behaved in such a way that she could not help cursing him. Abu-Jahl struck her on the cheek so hard that she began to cry. Abu-Sufyan was passing by and asked the girl what had happened. Learning the story, he took her by hand, approached Abu-Jahl, held fast his hands, and asked Fatima to take her revenge by slapping Abu-Jahl. She did and ran away smiling. Naturally when the Prophet came to know of the incident, he was grateful to Abu-Sufyan.

111. The social organization of Mecca was such that people lived in tribes; and although these tribes had developed into a sort of federal city-state for defense and foreign relations, in internal affairs each tribe was independent. And there was great solidarity inside the

tribe : all for each and each for all, both in weal and woe. Owing to this reason, it was not possible for people of one tribe to do harm with impunity to members of another tribe. Muhammad's was a formidable tribe : Not only the Banu-Hashim were numerous in themselves, but had a perpetual alliance with the cousin tribe of Banu'l-Muttalib; further the neighbouring allies (Khuza'a) and also the Madinan relatives banu'n-Najjar) were always ready to rush in favour of his family. So the Meccans could not risk easily their enmity so long as the head of the family, Abu-Talib would not denounce Muhammad. Abu-Talib had not embraced Islam, so the pagans still cherished some hope on his part. In fact a delegation of pagan Meccans came to him and said : "Your nephew Muhammad is unnecessarily creating tension in the town, dividing families and estranging friends; if he seeks thereby money, we are prepared to give him as much money as he likes, if he wants marriage, we shall give him the most beautiful girl in the town, if he wants power, we are prepared to proclaim him our king, on the sole condition that he gives up insulting our gods and our ancestral beliefs. If not, you are mobilizing against your tribe the unanimous hostility of entire Mecca." Abu-Talib promised to think over the matter; and he asked Muhammad to meditate twice before rejecting it. But Muhammad said at once : If they place the sun in my right hand and the moon in the left, even then I won't change an iota of what God has charged me to preach. If you want to abandon me, God is great, He would protect me against one and all! Sobbing and shedding tears he left his uncle, who however called him at once back and told him that he would on no account abandon him.

112. Another delegation came and proposed a "compromise" : We are prepared to adore the God of Muhammad, let him also adore our gods, so that whichever of the two is right would benefit us both, and

none of us would be losing by this double allegiance! Muhammad replied contemptuously by reciting the following chapter of the Quran:

"Say : O disbelievers!
I worship not that which ye worship;
Nor worship ye that which I worship.
And I shall not worship that which ye worship.
Nor will ye worship that which I worship.
Unto you your religion, and unto me my religion!
(109/1-6)

113. This exasperated the Meccans, and increased the vehemence of their persecution. Feeling himself powerless to protect his disciples of other tribes, Muhammad suggested to them to emigrate to Abyssinia, adding : "There is a king who loves justice and in whose territory nobody is oppressed." Possibly Muhammad had known that personally in one of his numerous trade voyages : he had been to Syria-Palestine, to 'Uman and to Yemen; he could also have been to Abyssinia, from Yemen by just crossing the narrow Bab'ul-Mandab. In fact in a letter of the Prophet, recorded by Tabari, we read : "I have sent to you my cousin, Ja'far, accompanied by a small number of Muslims; if he comes to thee, receive them in hospitality, and do not behave tyrannically". This seems to be the letter of introduction which the Prophet gave to his cousin Ja'far son of Abu-Talib, when he departed for the country of the Negus. When the first emigrants were well-treated, waves of others followed exasperating further the pagan Meccans.

114. A curious misunderstanding took place at Mecca. One day the Prophet was reciting loudly some verses of the Quran (53/19-20) in his prayer. The passage spoke of the principal deities of the Meccan

pantheon : "Do you see Lat and 'Uzza..." Then the people heard : "They are the mighty lords, there is hope of their intercession". Some say it was the Devil who pronounced these affirmations; others think that the Prophet may have pronounced them with the tone of interrogation (and in fact there are several interrogatory passages in the Quran which do not begin by an adverb of question, for instance IV, 79, VII, 115. Anyhow the passage is not in the Quran). Then the Prophet inclined and then went down in prostration. People who were far away in the compound of the Ka'ba had not heard Muhammad directly, but the relay of a Meccan who was nearby, who mistook Muhammad to be affirmative, repeated the "glorification and intercession" of the idols, and gladly prostrated in company of Muhammad. When gradually the news came to Muhammad, he denied having pronounced any praise of idols. The misapprehension vanished only to increase the anger of the Meccans. They decided to take vengeance on those who had escaped to Abyssinia. A Meccan delegation went to see Negus, bribed his courtiers, and demanded the extradition. Negus heard the reply of the refugees, and seeing through their machinations, rejected the unjust demand of the pagans.

115. Frustrated by this failure, the Meccans increased pressure on Abu-Talib to abandon Muhammad. A delegation came to propose : "Muhammad is not your son but only adopted as such; hand him over to us, and here is a better substitute, the most beautiful and intelligent youth in Mecca, adopt him as your son!" Abu-Talib maliciously replied : "I must give over my son to be beheaded by you, and you give me yours, charging me to feed him! Where is the justice?"

116. The pagan Meccans deliberated and found a solution without risking a war : All pagan tribes of Mecca

and their allies in the neighbouring territory, particularly the Ahabish--(who are not to be confounded with Abyssinians, for these Ahabish were Arabs of Banu-Kinana)--resolved to boycott the family of the Prophet: nobody should talk to them, nor sell to, or purchase from them, nor give or take girls in marriage". The tribe left the town and retired in a secluded suburb, where it was easier to defend against any shooting or pelting of stones on women and children. The incorrigible Abu-Lahab preferred abandoning his tribe and sided with the pagans, and remained in the town (where probably he had a petty commerce). The decisions of the Meccans were put in black and white, and the document was solemnly hung inside the temple of the Ka'ba. The boycott lasted continuously for several years, and was very painful to endure. Some relatives on the side of women married in the tribe of the Prophet, those of his wife Khadija etc., sent clandestinely from time to time some help in victuals. During the Hajj season also there was some possibility of purchasing from foreigners. Yet there were only expenses, and no revenues, and commercial affairs were stagnant.

117. There is a story. One day the Prophet told that white ants had eaten the document hanged in the Ka'ba, and no word was left except the words. "God" and "Muhammad". Abu-Talib informed the Meccans of that. It was found correct, to the dismay of the Meccans, yet without any apparent effect. More effective was the effort of individuals. One of them, who was particularly afflicted by hearing the cries of little children suffering from hunger, took the initiative of consulting a friend of his in whom he had confidence. This latter was also of the same opinion, but wanted some more friends. When six persons of different tribes holding same views were discovered, they met secretly to decide how to proceed. The next morning, one of them stood up in the

courtyard of the Ka'ba to declare publicly that he was no more for the boycott. Abu-Jahl opposed vehemently at once. Then one after the other all the six stood up and said their families did not agree with the pact of the boycott and would not apply.

118. The tribe of the Prophet could return to the town. The years of privation had ruined the health of many. Very soon after Khadija, the wife of the Prophet, breathed her last, followed by Abu-Talib the protecting uncle. Abu-Lahab now became the head of the family.

119. Sometime passed in silence and sorrow. An elderly Meccan lady, Sauda had gone along with her husband to Abyssinia, for they had embraced Islam. Sukran, the husband, turned there somehow to Christianity, but Sauda resisted all persuasion and pressure. When Sukran died sometime later, Sauda returned to Mecca, to the great admiration of the Prophet. He proposed her marriage and she was happy for the honour the Prophet was conferring on her. Apparently she had no children, so she loved the children of the Prophet in all tenderness.

120. Abu-Lahab could not control his hatred and soon found a pretext to excommunicate Muhammad and declare him as an outlaw. Anybody could now assassinate him with impunity. Instead of seeking protection of some other family, the Prophet preferred to emigrate. The town of Ta'if was at two days' journey and there were some of his maternal uncles also. He wanted to try. Leaving his wife and children at home, he went along with his faithful servant Zaid ibn Haritha to Ta'if in great hope. When he asked the leaders of the town to embrace Islam and help him, their reaction was worse, beyond all expectations. He was asked to leave at once the town; street urchins pursued him, pelting

stones at him relentlessly, and wounded him and his servant. He found someone on the door of a garden, who consented to give him asylum, and chased away the band of mischievous lads. The guardian-gardener was a Christian slave. He gave some hospitality, by bringing some fruits to eat. When the Prophet pronounced the name of God before eating, humanity was supplemented by curiosity and they talked long on religious problems. When the calm was restored, the Prophet continued his march back to Mecca. He passed the night at Nakhla, praying and complaining to God for the utter helplessness in which he found himself. Without despairing in the least, he prayed God to give him necessary force and enable him to pursue his efforts for the communication of the Divine message. The text of the celebrated prayer is preserved, and of course has great veneration among Muslims. God heard his prayer. The revelation of the Surat 72, called "The Jinn" (of also 46/29) brought the first consolation, for it informed him that during that night some jinns had passed thereby, had heard the recitation of the Quran by the Prophet, discovered that he was the new prophet after Moses, embraced Islam and departed with the intention of preaching it among other jinns. The very beginning of the surat al-jinn : "Say : It is revealed to me that a company of the jinn gave ear..." implies that the Prophet himself remained unaware of the presence of his invisible group of visitors.

121. Arriving at the outskirts of Mecca near the Hira' cave, the Prophet sent a hired messenger to a member of the family of his mother, demanding him to take him in his protection. He refused. Next he tried a relative of his new wife Sauda, who too refused. Then he tried a relative of his former wife Khadija one of those who had even taken active part not only to feed the family during the boycott, but also to denounce the

boycott. He consented. So he and some other members of his family took arms and went to Hira to escort Muhammad back to Mecca and declared publicly in the compound of the Ka'ba that he had taken Muhammad under his protection.

The Mi'raj

122. There was practically no hope of useful work in the town of Mecca. The Prophet passed his time in prayer and meditation. There seemed to be no prospect for the expansion of the faith, not even for the freedom of conscience and cult for the few who had embraced Islam. Soon after his return from Ta'if one day he visited the family of his late uncle Abu-Talib, perhaps to tell them of his experience with the relatives in Ta'if. Abu-Talib's memory must have overwhelmed him : how during his lifetime he was protected against all odds. He passed the night there. And there he had an exalted vision :

123. He saw as if he was in the courtyard of the Ka'ba. Gabriel came to awake him, and communicate to him the Divine invitation to come and see Him in the heavens. A heavenly animal, Buraq, was there, which he rode, while Gabriel flew along as pilot and guide. In an instant one arrived at the gate of the first or the lowest heaven. Gabriel announced him and after verification the guardian opened the gate. There Muhammad saw Adam, who greeted him as his "son" with all the paternal love and pride at a son who had had such honours. The marvels of that heaven were also shown to him. Then the party mounted to the second, third and so on upto the seventh heaven. In everyone of them, one or two prophets greeted him : Jesus and John-Baptist, Aaron, Moses etc., and Abraham in the seventh. If others greeted him as their "brother", Abraham greeted

him as his "son" and congratulated him for the honours bestowed on him. Every-where he visited the indescribable marvels. Then the small caravan mounted to a place where a jujube tree (sidra) marked the unsurpassable limit. Gabriel took leave, saying : "If I advance, I shall be burnt alive by the Divine lights; you being the invitee, should advance." And explained to him how to proceed, right, left etc. Following the indications, the Prophet arrived at a place where he heard the noise of pens writing. This was the "bureau", which took down Divine orders and transmitted them to whomsoever they concerned, Muhammad continued to advance, until he reached the "precincts of the saintliest of the saint" (hazirat'ul-qudus). when the distance between him and the Lord was of "two bows' length or even less' (qaba qausain au adna), he stopped, and presented his "sincere and pure salutations" (tahiyat) to God. Presently came the gracious reply : "Peace on thee O Prophet and the mercy and benediction of God". Wishing in solicitude to make others also participate in the Divine favour and grace, Muhammad continued : "Peace on us and on the virtuous slaves of God". Then the Lord "revealed to him what He wanted to reveal" (Quran 53/10). If he had revealed ten commandments to Moses on Sinai (Exodus XX), He revealed twelve to Muhammad (of Quran 17/23-39), more comprehensive, and constituting a fine code of moral conduct :

1. Thy Lord hath decreed, that ye worship none save Him.
2. And Kindness to parents...
3. And give the kinsman his due, and the needy, and the wayfarer...
4. And let not thy hand be chained to thy neck nor

open it with complete opening...(neither squandering money nor being miserly).

5. Slay not your children, fearing a fall to poverty...
6. And come not near unto illicit sexual intercourse...
7. And slay not the life which God hath forbidden...
8. And come not near the property of the orphan if not with what which is the best, till he come to strength (majority)...
9. And keep the covenant...
10. And fill the measure when ye measure (as a merchant), and weigh with a right balance...
11. And follow not that whereof thou hast no knowledge. Lo, the hearing, the sight and the heart--of the (act of) each of these the account will be asked.
12. And walk not in the earth exultant...

Accepting that the Divine mercy and benediction should not concern only His beloved prophet, but also include the virtuous, God said that they receive these fifty times a day, by celebrating as many services of worship; and we shall presently return to it. When giving leave to Muhammad to return to the lowly earth, God took a precious gift from "the treasure of the Divine throne" and gave it to the Prophet; this is contained, according to a saying of the Prophet, in the last two verses of the second sura of the Quran. In fact we read there : "...God doth not task a person if not according to his capacity..." What could in fact be a more precious gift to humanity

with all its weaknesses! If God were to task, not according to our individual capacities, but as one ought to do, where would we be on the Dooms Day? On the return journey, Gabriel made Muhammad visit Paradise and Hell, and pass by different prophets in the different heavens, who congratulated him for the high honours. Learning the prescription of fifty services of worship a day, Moses recalled his own experience with his people and suggested soliciting a reduction. In fact they were reduced to five on request after request, and God promised that He would give tenfold reward, five counting for fifty (of Quran 6/160). And the Prophet has announced: "The service of worship is the ascension (mi'raj)"--and according to another version: Divine proximity (qurban)-- "Of every Believer". Of course the proximity of the Lord, during the audience, would vary according to each individual and his higher and lower rank. Those who know the Islamic way of prayer, would recall that one exchanges salutation with God (at-tahiyatu lillah), when one has the honour of spiritually being received in the Divine presence (tashahhud) by using the same formulas as did the Prophet during his ascension. The Prophet first descended in Jerusalem, where all the former Prophets had also assembled to receive him. A prayer of thanksgiving, of a couple of cycle (rak'ats) was celebrated, and at the unanimous request of these prophets, it was Muhammad who led this service. From there he returned to his bed, in Mecca.

124. God being omnipresence, there is of course no question of physical distance to traverse. The Quran itself has used for this the term ru'ya, a vision. And the Prophet says, it happened while "I was in a state between sleep and wake-fulness". Some years later, his beloved wife A'isha asked him the details of his ascension, and naturally understood them better than

those companions who had no such intimacy. She says: "It was a spiritual journey and a vision". Al-Maqrizi adds: Hudhaifa and Mu'awiya from among the companions of the Prophet, were also explicitly of the same opinion. 'Abdallah ibn Mas'ud is reported to have insisted that it was a bodily transportation. Whatever the nature of this ascension, it is the most exalted in the experience of man. Enoch, Abraham, Jacob and several other prophets too are reported to have had similar experiences; to Moses God condescended on Mount Sinai, so that he could support the epiphany (tajalli) but to Muhammad God allowed to ascend to the "precinct of the saintliest of the saintly" (hazirat'ul-qudus). Let us not envisage it as a touristic affair, but of spiritual import. According to the tradition it occurred on 27th of Rajab.

125. Next day when Muhammad announced his heavenly journey, reaction of individuals varied, each according to his temperament. Abu-Bakr was so convinced that before even verifying it directly from the Prophet he confirmed it; he received from the Prophet the highly honoured title of *siddiq*, the truthful. The unbelievers naturally discredited and mocked: some who had visited Jerusalem during their commercial journeys asked to describe it to them--and forgot that Muhammad must also have visited it when leading the caravan of Khadija to Busra beyond Jerusalem--and put other silly questions. They were particularly disdainful that Muhammad should have been received in audience by God, even in a dream. The estrangement increased, and so did persecution also. A Yemenite, at-Tufail at-Dausi visited Mecca at this epoch, and with an unprejudiced mind he found Islam so reasonable and so much superior to his native idolatry, that not only did he embrace Islam but returned home also as an enthusiastic missionary of the new faith. Some years later he would come again to

visit him, in Madina, accompanied by as many as 80 families representing the converts in his tribe. That he did not, while in Mecca, invite the Prophet to his country, seems to have been due to the fact that there was the temple of Dhu'l-Kaffain, rival of the Ka'ba, and the vested interests of the family of the guardian of the idol were not easy to be dominated by a junior members of the tribe as Tufail was.

CHAPTER 5

YATHRIB BECOMES THE CITY OF THE PROPHET

126. The search for an asylum continued. During the season of the pilgrimage we see the Prophet at Mina, going from the camp of one tribal contingent to another, asking each to believe in him as messenger of God and help him preaching Islam under their protection, and promising to the incredulous that very soon they would become masters of both the Big realms of the epoch, the Byzantine and the Sassanid empires. Close at his heels was always his inveterate enemy and uncle Abu-Lahab, who forthwith warned the listeners of the Prophet of the risks they would incur, and covering the Prophet with calumnies. As much as fifteen contacts are reported to have been made on the day, with varied reactions: some rudely chasing him away, others being more polite and finding excuses and pretexts not to grant him asylum. Unperturbed, he would continue the preaching of Islam among them. But the sixteenth attempt would discern a ray of hope. Before describing this last yet successful attempt, it is interesting to note that the fifteen tribes he had approached without any result represented the whole of the Arabian Peninsula: tribes from the North, the South, the East, the West and the Centre of the desert continent were there, as we see in the narration of Ibn Hisham. This fact is an unmistakable proof to the effect that the Meccan pilgrimage was recognized by all the Arabs and not merely by some of them. This "spiritual" supremacy of the Ka'ba was profited and utilized by traders, and not vice versa, since the Meccan

region had neither agriculture, nor industry, nor any other attraction in order to create there a commercial metropolis of Arabia.

127. As just mentioned, the sixteenth encounter was fructuous. A small group of half a dozen people from Madina, of the tribe of Khazraj, the same from which had hailed the mother of 'Abd al-Muttalib were in a hair-cutter's "saloon"-- a rite which completed the pilgrimage -- and were sitting in an out of the way place, close to the principal pillar of Satan which was ceremoniously lapidated. Perhaps these pilgrims were helping each other to cut the hairs. The tribe of Khazraj had recently won a victory over its rival and cousin tribe, Aus, at Madina. (And an Ausite delegation was at the moment trying desperately to conclude a military alliance with the pagans of Mecca). Being neighbours of Jews, they knew more than other Arabs the notions of the revelation, prophets and the expected Messiah. When the Prophet recited to them in his melodious voice a passage of the Quran, and explained to them his doctrines affirming to be the messenger of God, the Madinans recalled how sometime the helpless and desperate Jews taunted them : "Wait a bit, the last prophet is coming soon, and in his company we shall dominate you". In the speech and in the personal behaviour of the Prophet there appeared to them nothing to preclude that possibility. Why not steal then the priority? In a quick exchange of opinions, they found themselves unanimous. Embracing sincerely the religion of Islam, they promised to propagate it in their country, and to report the result next year at the same place. The following pilgrimage season disclosed wonderful harvest :

128. The bloody internecine feuds between the Aus and the Khazraj had given food for thought to all

thinking Madinans. The victorious and numerous Khazrajites wanted to exploit the situation and impose their hegemony, and thus impose a peace. In fact, they had decided to crown their chief, Ibn Ubaiy, as king; and passed orders to local goldsmiths accordingly. The decimated Aus were sincerely disgusted with the fratricidal wars. Of course they would not easily admit Ibn Ubaiy becoming king of the whole population. The message of Islamic fraternity and peace that the six Khazrajites had brought made such a deep impression in the town that it recruited converts as much from the Aus as from the Khazraj; and it goes to the credit of the first batch who forgot their military superiority of the moment and welcomed the Ausites as equals and brothers. So, during the ensuing season of pilgrimage, twelve families sent their representatives to pay homage personally to the Prophet, at Mina; nine were from Khazrajites, and three from Ausites. Later history shows that, that meant almost the totality of the Arab population in Madina. They took oath of allegiance by promising that "they will ascribe nothing as partner unto God and will neither steal nor commit illicit sexual intercourse nor kill their children (for fear of penury), nor produce any lie that they may devise between their hands and feet, nor disobey thee (= Muhammad) in what is recognized on all hands as good" (of Quran 60/12). Thereafter the Prophet nominated twelve representatives as his delegates in Madina--twelve *naqibs*, with one of them as the "*naqib of the naqibs*"-- and this number never increased in the coming years when the whole town embraced Islam. The delegates were careful to demand of the Prophet a qualified teacher to accompany them to Madina, for further work. Mus'ab ibn 'Umair went there as a missionary. (The mother of his brother, Abu'r-Rum, was a Greek; may be, he was his full-brother. The Byzantino-Iranian war seemed to be responsible for the fact that Greek boys and girls, purchased as slaves, were found in Arabia also.

Thus 'Ikrima son of Abu-Jahl possessed a Greek boy as his slave; other such cases were found in Ta'if also.)

129. The work of Mus'ab at Madina would enlighten us on the society of the epoch. Friends there told him: Such and such a person is the most difficult to handle; if you rally him, there will later be no obstacle in your way. Mus'ab at once went to his farmyard, and took a seat in a date-palm grove, and began reciting loudly the Quran. Some members of the clan gathered in curiosity to hear the harmless "music". When the news of the "intrusion" in his garden reached the chief, he came out hurling his lance, and told Mus'ab: "How can you come here without my permission; get out immediately or I shall pierce you with the lance!" Smilingly and with his sweet voice, Mus'ab said: You are perfectly right; but just listen to what I was saying. If that displeases you, I shall immediately quit. The chief planted his lance in the soil and said: That is equitable. Mus'ab psalmodied a passage of the Quran, with which the rude Arab was charmed and he asked the details: what is this? What it stands for? Mus'ab said: It is part of the Quran revealed by God to the prophet Muhammad, who preached Islam which meant renouncing manmade gods in favour of the One who has created the universe and meant also justice, charity, obedience to God...The chief did not require more and interrupted: What do you do to adhere to this doctrine? When he learnt the profession of the faith, he took away his lance and returned back as excited as he had come; and in the midst of his family, he hurled: Come here everybody. When members of the family, servants and slaves assembled, he cried: Who am I? Seeing him in rage, his kinsmen replied: You are our chief, the most intelligent, the most valorous...He hurled again, waving his lance: If you do not embrace immediately Islam, which this Meccan Mus'ab preaches, I shall be your greatest enemy! Before sunset the entire

clan had rallied to Islam.

First Friday Prayer

130. Mus'ab had daily and ever-increasing successes. From time to time he wrote to the Prophet at Mecca, to give him the glad news; perhaps also to demand of him instructions on difficult questions of belief and cult which individuals may have asked him. One day he received, in reply to one of his letters, a letter from the Prophet which said: "Every Friday, that is the day on which the Jews make preparations for their weekly Sabbath holiday, when the sun passes the meridian, lead a congregational service of prayer of the Muslims" Twelve persons attended on the first occasion.

131. Neither Mecca was then a Muslim country nor Madina, yet in Madina there was liberty of conscience for Muslims. So in this non-Muslim country, as Madina then was, the Prophet prescribed the Friday prayer, in place of the *zuhr* (midday) prayer. Sources do not mention if Mus'ab pronounced also a sermon (*khutba*). However when soon the Prophet would come there in person, he would do that regularly.

Decision to Migrate en mass to Madina

132. When the new hajj season approached, 500 Madinans left for Mecca, including the missionary Mus'ab. Not all of them were Muslims, not even the majority, but only 74 of the contingent, including two women, one of whom even gave birth to a child at Mecca during the pilgrimage. A meeting was arranged with the Prophet at Mina, during the full-moon nights. The Madinan Muslims came there so discreetly that even their non-Muslim compatriots and inmates of their camp did not perceive that. One after the other they declared

personally their conversion to Islam, and ceremoniously concluded the pact (bai'a) with the Prophet by saying : "We shall protect you as we protect members of our families, even if it means to fight the black and red (the entire hostile world), and we shall side with you be that against our relatives or strangers." Then they invited him and his Meccan disciples to Madina, offering hospitality and protection. The Prophet was accompanied by his worldly-wise uncle, al-'Abbas, who replied to the Madinan invitation : "That is surely going to be a war with the whole world; if ever you are going to abandon Muhammad after his arriving in your country, it is better not to invite him at all, for here he is safe in his family..." The Madinans protested their sincerity, and said they were serious and conscious of the implications of their invitation. The Prophet was satisfied and said : "Henceforward your blood is my blood, your remission (of blood) is my remission; I am of you, you of me!"

133. Unverifiable rumour had somehow reached the Meccan pagans of what had happened and they found in it a danger for them. In fact their Northern trade-route passed by Madina, which could be cut off; there was possibility one day even of an invasion of Mecca with the help of the Madinans. So their representative came to the camp of the Madinans and made inquiries. By chance they contacted the non-Muslim Madinans, who swore--and they were truthful--that they knew nothing of the sort, and nothing could happen without their knowledge. The Meccans were satisfied and returned, yet they learnt later the details of the pact, but this was when the Madinans had already left Mina. A single last-goer fell in their hands, suffered molestation, yet saner counsel prevailed that any harm to him would engage his whole tribe more actively against the Meccans. So he was released.

134. Meccan Muslims began, in small groups, to set out secretly for Madina, where they found welcome. In two months' time there remained at Mecca no Muslims except the Prophet and Abu-Bakr and their families, or such individuals as were forcibly detained and even imprisoned by their families, like younger children, slaves and the like. there was at least one case of a very good Muslim goldsmith, who did not disclose his conversion and deliberately remained in Mecca, apparently as an agent of the Prophet, to inform him of the local developments, and to do other secret work, such as hiding agents sent from Madina on secret missions, as al-Baladhuri records. Al-'abbas the uncle of the Prophet is also to be included in the same category, although his case is a bit different : He was the guardian of the holy well of Zamzam, and as such one of the ten members of the oligarchic council of the city-state of Mecca.

135. The pagan Meccans confiscated the property of the evacuees in rage, and held a general consultation, the famous *yaum az-zahma* (the day of over-flowing attendance). A resolution was adopted, efficacious yet crude: Muhammad should be assassinated, yet not at the hand of one or two persons, but a whole group of youngmen selected from all the Meccan tribes. The responsibility lying with very numerous tribes, the tribe of the Prophet should be dissuaded from declaring war, and be contented with blood-money, which could easily be collected and paid. This was too crude a plan to remain secret. An aunt of the Prophet came hurriedly one day to tell him--apparently from what she had learnt in the family of her husband--that there was a plot to assassinate him that night.

136. The Prophet at once went to see Abu-Bakr--it was noon--and explained to him the purpose of his visit

at that unusual time. It was decided that in those dark moonless nights of the early days of the month of Rabi' al-Auwal they both should pass the night in a well-known cave of the Mount Thaur, in the suburbs, and leave for Madina when calm was restored in the town. Abu Bakr charged himself to procure both the ride and the guide. The Prophet asked his adopted son, 'Ali, to take his place in the bed and confided to him all the deposits he had, in order to return them to the rightful clients, rejoining thereafter the Prophet in Madina. After these arrangements he returned to the house of Abu-Bakr. At an advanced hour of the night, they left the house from the back-side window, and soon began climbing the difficult up-hill road to Mount Thaur. Abu-Bakr was recognized by a friend en route, but he managed not to create suspicion. The traditions say that, arriving at the required point of the mountain, it was Abu-Bakr who first entered in the cave to give a sweep; he also closed the various holes inside, fearing serpents, by tearing his cloak. It was of no avail, a serpent did come out later and stung the heel of Abu-Bakr who tried hard to bear the pain, but his tears fell on the face of the Prophet and awakened him. When he learnt what had happened, he rubbed the spot with his saliva, and that cured the sting. A spider span a web on the entrance of the cave. Next morning a pair of pigeons built there a nest and laid eggs. It was arranged that a daughter of Abu-Bakr should daily bring what to eat, and a son should come every night to inform them of the situation in the town. The disappearance of the Prophet and of Abu-Bakr brought some trouble to the members of their families, but nothing serious happened. It goes to the credit of these pagans, that they did not resort to vicarious punishment; and what is interesting, they waited till morning so that the Prophet came out of his house for the dawn prayer in the courtyard of the Ka'ba, and would not force their way into the house, to kill him in his bed, although nothing prevented them from doing that.

Probably custom or superstition required that.

137. The searchers employed a tracer of foot-prints, and in fact he did lead up to the cave. The spider's web and the pigeon nest misled them. After three days, the Meccans were sure that Muhammad was no more in the vicinity. They did announce a prize for one who captured him, but vigilance diminished. When the Prophet decided to leave the cave, two camels waited the party along with a guide who had been hired by Abu-Bakr, and the small caravan left for Madina. Although the guide intentionally avoided the main route, fearing to meet the allies of the Meccans, still the Mudlijite Suraqa recognized them, and it was the prize announced by the Meccans that attracted him. He was superstitious; he was already hesitant when the divination arrows discussed him; and when he fell from his horse which stumbled in the sand, he gave up all idea of doing them harm; much more, he asked pardon of them, and even offered hospitality, which was thankfully refused. It was a long march of 8 days. One day they could get something better than what they had with them to eat. In the tent of an old woman, Umm Ma'bad, they found an as old goat, which could not even go to pasture. Miraculously it gave milk, sufficient for the whole caravan and even for the family of the shepherdess. Another incident: Near Yanbu', the Aslamites tried to harass the caravan which was traversing their territory, but the head of the tribe, when he listened to the charming Quran, embraced Islam, and provided escort and "guard of honour" during the transit through his territory.

138. News had already reached Madina, and people were waiting every day, assembling on the Thaniyat'ul-Wada', a commanding hill near Quba, in the south of the town. One hot day--it was Monday 12th Rabi' al-Auwal

(31st May 622)--when people had already dispersed in despair, somebody perceived from above a tower in the town that a small caravan was plying in the desert route, coming towards the town. People reassembled, putting on their best attire and taking their arms. Boys and girls took their drums, and everybody sang in chorus with a sincerity never surpassed in history an improvised poem :

The full-moon has arisen on us

From the Thaniyat'ul-Wada'.

Thanks giving is incumbent on us.

So long as a invoker may invoke God.

O thou Divinely sent among us,

Thou hast brought a commandment that shall be obeyed !

139. On arriving in the locality of Quba, the Prophet took some rest under the shadows of a palm-grove. Group after group began to come, saluting and welcoming the Prophet. He at once participated in the construction of a simple hut, to serve as a mosque where he led five times a day, the congregational prayer of the faithful. The rest of the time he spent in preaching morality and charity, teaching the tenets of Islam and attending to multifarious problems of the community consisting of local people as well as the refugees from Mecca, with no means of livelihood. A few days later, he rode from this provisional station to search a more permanent home. On every step delegations came to invite him to their respective settlements. He always replied : It is my she-camel which shall select for me, leave it unperturbed, and wherever she sits, I shall get

down. It plied several kilometers, and then sat down in an open space. The Prophet gave her a kick to stand, she paced a few steps, returned back and sat down in the former place. Providence had made the choice. The space between the spot the camel first sat, and the distance later covered, indicated the piece of land he should select. He purchased the land for constructing a mosque and also some rooms for him and for his family. Nearby was the house of Eyup Sultan (Abu Aiyub al-Ansari, who now reposes in Istanbul), and belonged to the family of the mother of 'Abd al-Muttalib; his rejoicing was unlimited for the unexpected and God-sent guest. He took the luggage of the Prophet to his house. Until the construction of the house of the Prophet was completed, he was the host of the holy Prophet.

Rehabilitation of the Displaced Persons

140. Hundreds of Meccans had taken refugee in Madina, and they had practically no property. The problem of their integration in the local economy was the most pressing need. It concerned even the person of the Prophet though to a lesser degree. With the money he had brought from Mecca, he procured several she-camels and goats. These more than sufficed the needs of his family and the daily guests he received : at the time of the meal, whoever was present was invited to participate. Several of the Madinan Muslims had each presented a date-palm tree in his garden to the Prophet. Later he acquired several pieces of cultivated land in Madina, Khaibar and Fadak in particular. These were state-property; and after the frugal needs of his family, the rest of the yield was returned to the state-stocks for the poor and needy. A Madinan family came to present its compliments to the Prophet, and presented a ten years' old boy, Anas, as a personal servant to the Prophet. The family was proud of the land, since he

knew reading and writing at that age.

141. But for the generality of the Meccan refugees, the Prophet convened soon a general meeting, and suggested that each working and well-to-do Madinan Muslim should fraternize with a Meccan; and the families of the two should work and earn together, and even inherit from each other to the exclusion of other relatives, like brothers, cousins etc. All willingly agreed, and the Prophet himself selected the pairs of contractual brothers, according to individual qualities. The arrangement continued for several years. Meccans were not parasites. And when they enriched themselves sufficiently, they thankfully evacuated the properties of their Madinan hosts, and each became independent.

142. A few examples : 'Umar told his Madinan brother : I shall work one day to irrigate your garden, and you shall pass the day in the company of the Prophet, recounting to me in the evening all that had passed : revelation of new texts of the Quran, political and social decisions, and the like; the next day I shall go and you work in the farm. Another Meccan, 'Abd ar-Rahman ibn 'Auf was told by his host : "This is my property, half of it is yours; I have two wives select the one you like, I shall divorce her and you marry her..." But he replied : "God bless you in your property and your family. Show me only the way to the local market..." There he purchased something on credit, and forthwith sold it; and did that several times during the day. In the evening he had not only paid his debt, but had also earned enough to purchase his dinner. A few days later he visited the Prophet, clad in a new and costly dress, which showed that he had just married. Soon he became one of the richest merchants in the town, always charitable and helpful to the poor and of course to the cause of Islam.

Meccan Reaction

143. The escape of the Prophet was taken very seriously by the pagans at Mecca. They sent a delegation to Madina, demanding extradition or expulsion of the Prophet, and threatening with serious consequences on refusal. The delegation returned of course without least success, but it was enough to convince everybody that trouble was ahead, and that it was necessary that steps should be taken for defence and security. In fact two realizations of far-reaching effect date from this epoch : the constitution of a city-state in Madina and creation of buffer-states around it :

City-State in Madina

144. The Prophet convened a general meeting of the population, both Muslim and non-Muslim--in the house of the parents of Anas, his personal servant, as al-Bukhari records--and suggested that, to ban internecine feuds within and dissuade aggression from without, it would be desirable to constitute a city-state in the region of Madina, on a confederal basis, with very large autonomy to the units. Private justice was to be banished, appeal could be made to the head of the State, who had also the prerogative to decide who should participate in an expedition, the war and peace being indivisible. Social insurance was to be instituted on a pyramidal basis for the most heavy charges hurdening an individual, viz blood-money when the homicide is not to be punished by death and ransom to liberate a prisoner of war from the hand of the enemy. The unanimity reached. the provisions were reduced to writing and they constitute the earliest written-Constitution of a State promulgated by its head in the world. The text has come down to us in toto. Large extracts from this historic document would not be out of place here :

With the name of God the Most Merciful, the All-Merciful.

This is the prescript of Muhammad the Prophet, to operate among the Faithful and the Submissive to God, from among the Quraish and the people of Yathrib and those who may be under them and join them and take part in wars in their company.

Verily they constitute a political unit (umma), as distinct from the other peoples.

The Emigrants from the Quraish shall be responsible for their ward, and shall pay the blood money in mutual collaboration, and shall secure the release of their prisoners by paying their ransom, so that the mutual dealings between the Believers be in accordance with the principles of recognized goodness and justice. So also the Banu 'Auf...the Banu'l-Harith...the Banu Sa'ida. the Banu Jusham...the Banu'n-Najjar...the Banu Amr ibn 'Au the Banu'n-Nabit...and the Banu'l-Aus...of Banu Tha'laba and the Believers shall not leave anyone hard pressed with debts without helping him in recognized goodness with regard to ransom or blood money.

And no Believer shall opposed the client of another Believer against the latter.

And the hands of pious Believers shall rise against every such person as stands in rebellion, or is guilty of any violation of pledge, or excess, or attempts to spread mischief among the Believers; and their hands shall rise together against such a person even if he be a son of anyone of them.

And no believer shall kill another Believer in retaliation for an unbeliever, nor shall he help an

unbeliever against a Believer.

The protection of God is indivisibly one, and the humblest of the Believers can, by extending this to anyone put the obligation on all....

Those who obey us from the Jews will have help and equality : neither shall they be oppressed nor shall any help be given against them.

The peace of the Believers shall be one; and if there be a war in the path of God, no Believer shall make any peace with the enemy separately from other Believers...

Every detachment that will fight on our side will be relieved by turns.

The Believers as a body shall take vengeance for each other of the blood shed in the path of God...

No pagan (subject) shall give any protection to property or life of any Quraishite, nor shall he obstruct any Muslim in his matter.

If anyone intentionally murders a Believer and it is proved, he shall be killed in retaliation, unless the heirs of the murdered person agree to blood-money...It shall not be lawful for any Believer, who has accepted the contents of this Document and has faith in God and the Last Day, to give up or protection to any murderer...

And whenever ye differ about anything, its reference shall be to God and to Muhammad.

The Jews shall bear their expenditure along with the Believers so long as they fight in conjunction.

The Jews of the Banu 'Auf shall be considered as a community along with the Believers, for Jews their religion and for Muslims their religion, be one a client or original members of the tribe; but whoever shall be guilty of oppression or violation, shall put to trouble none but his own person and the members of his house. The Jews of Banu'n-Najjar'... of Banu'l-Harioth... of Banu Sa'ida... of Banu Jusham... of Banu'l-Aus... of Banu Tha'laba (together with the branch Jafna)... and of Banu'sh-Shutaiba shall have same rights... and the sub-branches of the Jews shall have the same rights as the principal members.

None of them shall go out on military expedition except with the permission of Muhammad...

The valley of Yathrib shall constitute an inviolable territory for the parties of this document.

The protected alien shall be considered just like the original member : neither shall he be harmed, nor shall he himself violate the pledge. Protection cannot be given (by a protected) without the permission of the original member.

If any murder or quarrel of inter-tribal nature takes place between the parties of this document, from which any trouble may be feared, it shall be referred to God and to Muhammad messenger of God...

The Quraish shall be given no protection, nor those who help them.

There shall be mutual aid between all inhabitants against those who invade Yathrib.

If the Jews are invited to participate in and adhere to a peace they shall do that; and if they invite

likewise, the same shall be incumbent upon the Believers in their favour. The fight for the cause of religion shall be excepted.

Every group shall be responsible for the part (of the city) which faces it.

The Jews of al-Aus, clients as well as original members, shall have same rights as the parties of this document...

This prescript shall not protect any oppressor or violator of pledge. Whoever goes out (in a military expedition) shall have security, and whoever stays in Madina shall have security, except one who commits oppression and violates pledge. God is the protector of those who fulfil and observe the pledge scrupulously, even as Muhammad messenger of God.

Alliance for Defence

145. Internal peace once consolidated, the Prophet began visiting tribes outside Madina, especially those through whose territory the Meccan caravans passed while going to Iraq, Syria or Egypt, to and fro. He tried and succeeded in making defensive alliances with them, on the basis of mutual military aid in case of foreign invasion. Muslim detachments could traverse their territory, but not the enemies of Islam.

146. Among these tribes we find the Damra, Juhaina and Muzaina. They lived respectively to the South, the North and the West of Madina. Big towns are the markets for the products of the nomadic and semi-nomadic tribes. These people around Madina depended economically on the town, and there was no substitute. May be there have been pre-Islamic alliances between Madinans and at least some of these neighbouring tribes,

as the case of a chief of Juhaina tends to prove : A Muslim detachment went to his territory to intercept a Meccan caravan, but the local chief, Majdi ibn 'Amr, "who was an ally of both the parties", intervened, and the Muslim detachment returned without fighting.

147. As for the Damra, this was the tribe of Abu Dharr al-Ghifari, one of the very early converts to Islam. His influence could have prompted the tribe to conclude a treaty of military alliance with the Muslims, the treaty mentioning explicitly that the Damra shall not be entangled in case a war began on religious grounds. That is to say, this tribe though sympathetically disposed towards Islam, had not yet embraced it. The texts of the treaties with Damra, Ghifar, Rab'a and Zur'a of the Juhainites have come down to us, not that of the Mudlij, further to the South, but its clauses must have been similar. The attitude of the Mudlijite Suraqa--who had tried to harass the Prophet during the Hijra journey to Madina--was very sympathetic, and when the Prophet now went to al-'Ushaira, to intercept a Meccan caravan, Suraqa so lavishly feasted the whole detachment that precious time was lost and no contact could be established with the enemy caravan.

148. By these and similar pacts the Prophet daily increased the security of the Islamic territory. With alliance peaceful intercourse increased, and the Islamic religion began to penetrate among individuals of these tribes. Soon the Damra provided the best ambassador to Islam. This person, 'Amr ibn Umaiya ad-Damri was so loyal to the Prophet that the latter sent him even before his conversion to Islam as his envoy to the Negus of Abyssinia, to counteract the Meccan machinations there, after the battle of Badr, as we shall presently see.

149. Once a few tribes of the region were rallied,

the Prophet wanted to profit thereby in exerting economic pressure on the Meccans, whose caravans traversed this region when going to the North or returning therefrom. It was permissible on all moral grounds. The pagan Meccans had confiscated the property of the Muslims who had escaped to Madina. There was a state of war between the two, and all over the world it forms part of the belligerent rights to kill or capture enemy persons and plunder enemy property. Meccans were utilizing their trade benefits for preparing war against the Muslims in Madina. The Prophet had only demanded of the Meccans not to traverse the Islamic zone; capturing their caravans was only a sanction : if they did not penetrate the Islamic territory, they risked nothing.

CHAPTER 6

HOSTILE RELATIONS WITH MECCA

150. Mecca is a barren land, there is neither agriculture nor industry. The only means of subsistence for the population is commerce. The overland trade of Yemen with Europe, through Syria, passed through Mecca. The Meccan caravans in winter and summer (of Quran 106/2) brought them prosperity and security. Going to Yemen was useless if one could not thereafter go to Syria for bartering off the Yemenite goods. Not to be able to transit through Madinan territory affected their vital interests. So they wanted to force their way through. This led to an armed conflict with the Muslims, first at Badr, then in Madina itself (Uhud and Khandaq), and finally at Mecca when the conflict found a happy end.

151. A simple interdiction, not to cross Muslim zone could not suffice. So as soon as the first alliances with tribes around Madina were concluded, the Prophet began to send small detachments to harass those caravans which would not respect the inviolability of the Islamic territory. In open desert, where habitations are few and far between, penetration is easy, especially for Arab caravans which travelled during the night. Mountainous condition of the region rendered control very difficult. So only one out of ten patrols could succeed in encountering an enemy caravan. For this, precise informations about the movements of the caravans were

necessary, and these lacked in the beginning. When the territory under Islamic influence extended far and wide, and when enemy could not traverse the danger zone in a single night, the control could become more effective. All this required patience and constant vigilance.

152. Naturally the Meccans did not want to cede easily. When they knew that a big caravan of theirs was pursued in the gorges of Badr, they mustered sufficient forces to "give a lesson", but failed miserably : the Muslims, led by the Prophet in person, routed the enemy three times their number and more, killing seventy and capturing alive as many, whom he later liberated on a heavy ransom. This leniency did not produce a change of heart : the enemy made costly preparations for a war of revenge, recruiting mercenaries and allies. further they sent a delegation to Abyssinia once again to excite the Negus against the Muslims who had taken refuge in his kingdom. When the Prophet got the news--probably from his faithful agents in Mecca--he also sent, an envoy in the person of 'Amr ibn Umaiya ad-Damri, and outdid their machinations. Historians record that this Negus had to exile himself during a civil war in his country, and had passed his time in the Damra tribe (of as-Suhaili). May be, the personal relations of 'Amr ibn Umaiya dated from that time.

153. In due course, the Meccans swarmed Madina, and the battle took place in the valley of Mount Uhud. The enemy was four times as numerous as the Muslims, and did cause some harm to them, but nothing decisive happened. After a single encounter, the enemy retired and returned to Mecca. The trade artery remained closed. The Meccans deviated a bit from their route, and tried to cross the desert of Najd in order to go to Iraq. An audacious attack of the Muslim detachment was so successful that the enemy never tried it again, and all its

commerce was paralysed. Perspectives were dark to the enemy and despair gained more and more, when an unexpected ray of hope encouraged them to make one more effort : A whole tribe of Madinan Jews, the Banu Qainuqa' was ordered to quit for having dishonoured a Muslim woman, and then killing a Muslim who had come to her help. Later another tribe, Banu'n-Nadir intrigued with the Meccan enemies to invade Medina, plotted to kill the Prophet, and finally offering armed resistance to the Muslim government. They settled in Khaibar, and from there organized a vast conspiracy : they made a military alliance with Mecca, and purchased the services of the mercenaries of the Ghatafan and Sulaim tribes, to synchronize the attack. The Meccans in their turn demanded of their allies and friends to come to their help. Enemy was eight times as numerous as the Muslims when it came to besiege Madina, and not to be contented with a single battle. News of the preparations had reached the Prophet sufficiently early to permit him to take adequate measures for defence. He dug a ditch around the Muslim town and sent women and children to fortified towers which were abundant in the town and where even flocks of sheep could be kept. A war of attrition started, and it seems that when several weeks passed with no result, the enemy began to suffer from the exhaustion of provisions of food and fodder. Another important factor was the arrival of the season of hajj and the months of the Truce of God (ashhur hurum) during which not only they could not indulge in bloodshed but also could not deprive themselves of the tourist traffic of pilgrims at Mecca. The chilly months of January coupled with a tempest also played some role in their decision to lift the siege and return home.

154. When the situation seemed to Meccans to be absolutely hopeless, they began to discern signs that intrigued them. The Prophet sent the handsome

amount of 500 gold coins to be distributed among the poor of Mecca, where a famine was raging for want of rains. He also sent date-fruits in great quantity to the Meccan chief Abu-Sufyan and asked in exchange to barter his stock of hides which Abu Sufyan could not export for the insecurity of routes. There is reason to believe that the Prophet also promised him a safe-conduct and unmolested transit to Syria along with his trade goods through the Islamic territory. In fact a few weeks later when the Prophet undertook the expedition of Hudaibiya, in the suburbs of Mecca, Abu Sufyan was absent and was effectively in Syria and met Heraclius when he came to Jerusalem at that time (for a service of thanks-giving on account of his victory over the Iranians). At the same time the Prophet married Umm Habiba the daughter of Abu-Sufyan. She was a Muslim and had taken refuge in Abyssinia along with her husband. Being a drunkard, the latter preferred embracing there Christianity, but the wife would that not, and resisted all sorts of pressure exerted by her husband. The husband died drowned when he was intoxicated. Her constancy to Islam was a further motive for the Prophet to demand her hand in marriage. She was of course extremely happy for the honour of becoming the wife of the Prophet and thus the Mother of the Faithful. Muhammad was now a son-in-law of, and no more a stranger to Abu-Sufyan. His hostility to Islam decreased greatly. Commentators say that the verse 60/7, namely :

"It may be that God will ordain love between you and those of them with whom ye are at enmity. God is mighty, God is forgiving, merciful"

is an allusion to the same fact.

155. All these little happening had a cumulative

effect in favour of Islam. So after preparing in this way the ground in Mecca, the Prophet publicly announced that he was proceeding respectfully to visit Mecca for pilgrimage to the holy Ka'ba. was this not for the Meccan pagans a further motive of pride, creating a tender corner in their hearts for Islam seeing that their own municipal temple and their pantheon had become sacred in the eyes of Muhammad, their idol-breaking enemy number one? The Prophet arrived at Hudaibiya, in the outskirts of Mecca, and sent an envoy to ask permission to enter the town in peace for a few days. The Meccans sent a delegation to negotiate. The pact of peace was not difficult to conclude, since the Prophet had already decided to concede everything, in order to safeguard the amour-propre of the Meccans; and what he wanted in turn was twofold : a peace and an engagement on the part of the Meccans to remain neutral in the wars of the Muslims against third parties. Even if the Meccans understood that the neutrality concerned chiefly Khaibar, the temptation of peace and revival of commerce was too great to resist. They agreed. The pact said :

- a) The Prophet would not visit Mecca that year, but would come a year later, and remain there for three days only.
- b) There would be one-sided extradition : the Meccans taking refuge with the Prophet would on demand be handed over, but a Muslim taking refuge in Mecca would not be handed over.
- c) There would be truce for ten years, and Muslims could come to Mecca and go to Ta'if, and the Meccans could traverse Muslim territory to go to Syria.

- d) Each party would remain neutral in the wars of the other party with thirds.
- e) This truce would be open to other tribes also to adhere to it on the side of the one contradicting party or the other. (The Ahabish opted for the Meccan side, and the Khuza'a the Muslim side).

156. The consequences were out of all proportions :

i) Pacific contacts between Meccans and Muslim multiplied and conversions also increased enormously. Suffice to cite the great names of Khalid ibn al-Walid and of 'Amr ibn al-'As, whose conversion to Islam dates from his epoch.

ii) Scores of Muslims, detained in Mecca by their parents and patrons could escape in spite of the clause of extradition. Some details of the working of this clause of the truce would not be out of place. Already in the camp at Hudaibiya, Abu-Jandal (son of Suhail ibn 'Amr) demanded asylum, but on the demand of his father he was extradited; the most the Prophet could do was to obtain the promise of his father that he would not be tortured for his conversion. When en route for his return journey to Madina, the Prophet received another refugee, Abu Busair, who had escaped from Mecca. Two members of his family came on his heels to demand his return. The Prophet did that. But en route to Mecca, Abu Busair managed to kill one of the guard and came back to the Muslim army; the other guard also came; seeing the mood of the Prophet, Abu Busair left the army and disappeared, and the guard returned to Mecca empty handed. Owing to the truce, the Meccan caravans began to go again to Syria. Abu Busair installed himself in a gorge near Badr, and if he saw Meccan pagans

crossing it, he shot them dead with his arrows. Hearing of his exploits, many more Muslims escaped from Mecca and came to join him, and soon it became impossible for the Meccans to travel to the North for no fault of the Prophet. So they themselves demanded of him the cancellation of the clause of the one-sided extradition, and that he asked Abu-Busair and his companions to go to Madina. The Prophet consented to the great joy of all concerned. Before this modification of the treaty, two Meccan ladies also came to the Prophet. It is curious to note the attraction of Islam : One of these was the daughter of 'Uqba ibn Abu Mu'ait, one of the most inveterate enemies of Muhammad at Mecca and whom the Prophet had even beheaded on his capture at Badr. The young, unmarried daughter of the self same 'Uqba embraced Islam secretly, and escaped one day to Madina. Her two brothers came to demand her restitution. The Prophet said : the clause concerned men, not women. The Meccans did not insist. Another lady, a Madinan, wife of a Meccan, also left the family and fled to Madina. In her case the Prophet allowed the return of the mahr money to her husband. In fact, it is forbidden for a Muslim woman to marry, or even to continue to remain in wedlock of, a non-Muslim. Muslim men also have to abstain from marrying non-Muslim women (with the sole exception of scripturaries, ahl al-Kitab).

c) The Khaibar Jews were isolated from their Meccan allies, and were easily reduced to submission. Taima, Wadi'l-Qura, Fadak etc. were also attached to the Islamic territory, peacefully.

d) The Prophet addressed letters to foreign sovereigns, inviting them to Islam : Heraclius, Chosrose, Negus and several others. Islam was not to remain an Arabia religion. It is a pity that one of the Muslim envoys was murdered in Byzantine territory, and the

emperor Heraclius disdained the demand of the Prophet to repair the crime. Byzantine empire did merit the Divine punishment, but the unfortunate incidence was that the Christians have ever since become so prejudiced against Islam that with all the intelligence and progress in sciences they still cherish in general false and absolutely baseless notions against Islam.

e) There was some bloodshed between the allies of the Meccans and the allies of the Prophet, both tribes being secondary parties to the truce of al-Hudaibiya. Some stupid Meccans aided secretly their allies with men and material, to kill the allies of the Muslims. Many of these latter were Muslims. The violation could not be tolerated with impunity. The bloodless occupation of Mecca and the psychological transformation of the mentalities of the Meccan gives much food for thought.

157. On receiving news of the incident and complaint from his allies, the Prophet closed frontiers : none should leave Madina. This stopped circulation outside of news of what was going on in Madina. Then he ordered preparations for a grand expedition, without disclosing whereto was he intending. Then he sent word to Muslim tribes in different regions, to be prepared to join Muslim army at a minute's notice, yet always without precision as to the place of destination. Leaving Madina at the head of perhaps two to three thousand men, he travelled in a zigzag way, to absorb the contingents of various tribes. Nobody knew where he was really going, to North, or East or South? His army swelled en route with tribal contingents to ten thousand strong. At last he camped in the suburbs of Mecca. Normally several soldiers joined to cook their food. The Prophet ordered that, that night every individual Muslim should light a separate fire. Meccans living on

hill tops noticed that no less than ten thousand lights were glittering below in the plain, and surmised that there must be no less than fifty thousand men in the invading army. The Meccan chief Abu-Sufyan descended to spy, but was captured by Muslims; and there was none in the town to coordinate defence measures. Early next morning the Prophet divided his army in several units, each entering Mecca from a different route (thus barring also escape of Meccans). The commanders had strict order not to use their arms except in self-defence when attacked by anybody. When all was well in march, he liberated Abu-Sufyan, who was bewildered and perplexed. Military heralds ran hither and thither to proclaim loudly: "Whoever remains shut in his house will be safe, so also one who goes to the courtyard of the Ka'ba, or deposes his arms, or takes refuge in the house of Abu-Sufyan", (this last to the further perplexion of Abu-Sufyan and also of the Meccans). The town was overwhelmed, and occupied peacefully. Naturally the population was sullen. Soon the Prophet announced throughout the town, that people should assemble in the courtyard of the Ka'ba, where he would address them. Curiosity and fear mingled their feelings. The Prophet came there surrounded by his army, full of modesty, prostrating to God on the very back of the she-camel he was riding. First he ordered to remove all the idols there. Then he entered inside the building of the Ka'ba, and ordered to efface the figurative frescoes. Accept this" and he put out his hands on a small scene. It was the picture of Mary with the baby Jesus in her arms. The presence in the frescos of Abraham and Ismael, which is reported by al-Bukhari, is a clear proof that both these personalities were known even in the pre-Islamic Mecca as their ancestors. Coming out, he ordered the muazzin Bilal (of Abyssinian origin) to mount on the roof of the Ka'ba to call *adhan* to the prayer. 'Attab ibn Asid, one of the pagan chiefs, who was present there, whispered in the ears of a comrade besides him: "Thank

God, my father is already dead, otherwise he would not have been able to support that this black donkey--meaning the venerable Bilal--braying on the top of the House of God". After leading the congregational prayer for the Muslims, the Prophet turned to the assembly of the pagan Meccans, and reminding them of what they had stupidly done him for the last twenty one years, he asked: "What do you expect of me now?" Naturally their heads sank in shame. The Prophet could order to massacre them, to enslave them, or at least deprive them of their properties. Yet he would do nothing of the sort, but would calmly say: "No responsibility on you any more today, go, you are liberated". The psychological effect was so tremendous that 'Attab ibn Asid was overwhelmed and could not help stepping forward and saying: "O Mohammad I am 'Attab son of Asid, I attest that there is no God if not God Himself, and attest that you are the messenger of God". The Prophet also hesitated not for a second, and forthwith said: "As for me, I appoint you governor of Mecca". Very soon the Prophet returned to Madina, without leaving a single Madinan soldier to garrison Mecca. And he never regretted.

158. Before pursuing the story, it may be permitted to pause a while on this attitude. The fault for which Mecca was punished was not the fault of the entire population. At least morally Mecca did not deserve to be conquered. So the Prophet seems to have wanted just to change the government of Mecca, and install there people who should be impartial and serious. So he entrusted the administration to a Meccan, 'Attab and returned to Madina, making of course all that he could to change the mentality of the Meccans. His conduct as a conqueror was so generous that no prejudice could resist. Mecca embraced Islam, and of its own will attached to the Muslim State, and not as a town conquered and

constrained to acknowledge integration with a foreign country.

159. 'Attab's was not the only case. Another potentate Safwan came to the Prophet and said: I do not want to embrace Islam, give me a delay of two months for reflection and decision. The Prophet said: I give you four months! Others, like the hipparch 'Ikrima son of Abu-Jahl, had fled away in a just fear of punishment for their past acts. The Prophet accorded them immediately amnesty. Yet others received munificent gifts without least condition; their blind hate of Islam could not resist to such overtures.

160. The psychological effect of the short speech of Muhammad was tremendous. Over night practically the whole town was converted to Islam, and so sincerely that two years later, at the death of the Prophet, when many a tribe or region apostatized, Mecca remained one of the strongholds of Islam and contributed with heart and soul to pacify Arabia.

161. A week after the rallying of Mecca, the Prophet received news of the effervescence in Ta'if region, to the East of Mecca. He set out to meet the danger, and the famous battle of Hunain took place at about two days' distance from Mecca. A surprise attack by thousands of archers of the enemy in ambush, in the dark early hours of the morning overwhelmed the Muslims, who fled in all directions. It was the personal courage and cool-headed behaviour of the Prophet in the grim situation--who was surrounded by no more than dozen or so of the faithful, including one valorous lady, Umm 'Umara, who was even pregnant--that re-established the situation, and gradually other Muslims returned, and the enemy was obliged to retire, yet leaving its camp, families and children, herds of animals

and all the worldly belongings--which they had foolishly brought with them -- in the hands of the Muslims. After the victory, lady Umm 'Umara came to the Prophet with an air of just superiority, and said: "O messenger of God, these menfolk are miscreants, they have cowardly forsaken the field of battle in the path of God, all of them should be punished with death!" The Prophet smiled and praised her--(she had had just a dagger and no other weapon in the beginning of the battle; she killed an enemy to capture his sword, and then had begun fighting therewith) -- and blessed her, which calmed her.

162. Pursuing the defeated Hawazinites, he went as far as Ta'if, remained there for some time, whereafter he decided to exert pacific pressure rather than military siege--and it proved more successful, as we shall presently see--and returned to Mecca, and soon after to Madina.

163. A couple of months later, it was curious to see during the hajj season that Muslims were using the Ka'ba as the center of their monotheistic religion, and pagans coming from all parts of Arabia using the same edifice for their idolatrous rites. This also proves our hypothesis, that Mecca was not attached to the Islamic territory, but only its government was changed. 'Attab proved an ideal governor, both to Muslims and to non-Muslims. Of course soon when no pagan remained in Mecca, the situation changed both religiously and politically.

164. A year later the Prophet sent Abu Bakr from Madina, to represent him during the pilgrimage. At that time he caused to make a proclamation that thenceforward no non-Muslim would be allowed to approach the Ka'ba for idolatrous rites. The pilgrims, as

the tourist traffic in our day, was a source of considerable economic importance to the Meccans. So the Quran (9/28) came to assure the rather disheartened Meccans, with apparent perspectives of the fall of the number of pilgrims, that they need not be anxious. In fact the number of Muslim pilgrims increased beyond all expectations. During the following year people from all over Arabia had literally "entered by legions in the religion of God" (as the Quran 110/1-3 records); and we shall revert to it soon.

Financial Reforms

165. Earlier in this same year 9 H., the Prophet had made radical reforms in the financial administration of the Muslim State. Until that time, there were no "taxes" in the country. People were exhorted to do charity and spend in the path of God. Naturally they brought their charities to the Prophet to be spent as best he liked. Some non-Muslim regions paid tribute. But such an arrangement could not respond to the needs of the community in times of crisis. As alluded above, a Muslim ambassador was murdered in the Byzantine territory; the Prophet sent a punitive expedition of 3000 strong, but the enemy was 33 times more numerous at Mu'ta, and the Muslim army returned with loss. So the Prophet prepared the expedition of Tabuk, which counted thirty thousand men. Such an expedition required enormous expenditure, and voluntary contributions could hardly suffice. It was in these conditions that the "charity" of former days was institutionalized: a minimum was prescribed for various objects--harvests, commercial capitals, import and export, herds of cattles, mines etc. -- a time was fixed for annual payments, and recalcitrants were constrained to

submission by the use of force. It remained an act of piety, a part of the religion, yet it became a State-tax. The ancient name *zakat* (also *Sadaqa*) was retained, yet it became an obligation, and no more a voluntary act on the part of those who were in position to pay.

166. It is interesting to note that the Quran is almost silent as to the objects to be taxed and the quantity of the tax; yet the same Quran gives very precise details as to the principles of the budget of expenditure and the beneficiaries of the State income. Perhaps this implies that the taxation is left to the representatives of the people to decide according to times and needs. The verse dealing with the disbursement of the revenues is the following:

"The State revenues are only for the poor (among the Muslims) and destitutes (among the non-Muslims), and those who work for these (revenues), and those whose hearts are to be reconciled, and for freeing the necks (of prisoners and slaves), and those heavily charged, and in the path of God, and for the wayfarers; a duty imposed by God, God being knower, wise".

(IX, 60)

167. These eight categories are in fact very comprehensive and institute a welfare State. It is the caliph 'Umar who has said that *fuqara'* of the text means the poor among the Muslims, and *masakin* those among the non-Muslim inhabitants of the country.

168. Those who "work on the revenues", collecting, auditing, disbursing in the prescribed manner and supervising the work, mean in fact the whole administration of the State both civil and military.

169. To "reconcile the hearts" means both of Muslims and non-Muslims, and signifies in fact the secret service of the State as much for political ends as for religious proselytism.

170. Ransoming subjects of the state, both Muslim and non-Muslim made prisoner by an enemy, was very important in those days. Most interesting is the duty that slaves should be liberated at government cost, in addition to the liberation by private charity.

171. Those "heavily charged" are not the poor, who have already been mentioned, but those who have unexpectedly been charged with too heavy a responsibility. Caliph 'Umar organized interest-free loans for his end.

172. "Path of God" included first defence costs, and also all charitable expenditure like mosques, schools and so on.

173. "Wayfarer" or tourist traffic requires roads, bridges, police, health services, and also hospitality to those who are in transit.

Completion of the Mission

174. At the end of the year 10 H., practically the whole of Arabia had adopted Islam as its religion. Some small pockets of Jews, Christians and Zoroastrians remained attached to their faiths, yet when they recognized the suzerainty of the Muslim government, tolerance and internal autonomy were so much the more welcome to them that they had no more interference in their conscience--formerly they had to follow the dogmas of the sect that ruled the country, be that in Iran or in Byzantium--and each sect could believe as it liked under

the pax Islamica. Further, the whole Muslim territory was open to them as a market for their industrial or agricultural products. Islam ruled then from Yemen to the Southern districts of Iraq and Palestine.

175. It was in these circumstances that the Prophet decided to go himself to pilgrimage, in spite of his failing health. The news that the Prophet will make the pilgrimage of the Ka'ba attracted huge number of Muslims, falsifying the misgiving of the Meccans who feared a sharp fall in the number of pilgrims owing to the barring of the Ka'ba to non-Muslims. In fact at 'Arafat the Prophet could address that year to 140,000 pilgrims, both men and women. (If one were to count those who could not come that year to Mecca, one may suppose that the number of Muslims at that time was between five hundred thousands to a million). The conduct and precepts of the Prophet during that rite constituted law, and have not changed ever since. People assembled in 'Arafat, where the Prophet pronounced his celebrated sermon from the top of the Hill of Mercy (Jabal ar-Rahma) -- to which we shall revert--then returned to Mina, passing the night at Muzdalifa; there he performed sacrifices and the ritual lapidation of the Pillars of Satan. Then he paid a flying visit to Mecca, to make circumambulations of the House of God, and to march between the rocks safa and Marwa to and fro in pious meditation. Then he returned to Mina. After three days he came to Mecca again for a farewell visit to the House of God, and then returned to Madina, where he breathed his last three months later.

The Sermon on the Mountain

176. The sermon pronounced from above the Hill of Mercy resumes in fact the whole teaching of Islam, and constitutes a chart of humanity. It deserves to be

recorded here integrally :

Praise be to God! We praise Him, we ask Him for help, we demand of Him pardon, and make regrets to Him. We ask the protection of God against the ills of our souls and the evils of our acts. Whomsoever God leads aright, there is none to lead him astray; and whosoever He leads astray, there is none to lead him aright. I attested that there is no God if not God Himself, the One, without associate, and I attest that Muhammad is His slave and His messenger.

I enjoin on you, O slaves of God, to fear God, and I incite you to obey him. And I begin myself with what is good (i.e. I said the example before giving precept to others).

Whereafter, people, listen to my words so that I may making things clear to you. For I do not know, perhaps I may not meet you in this place again after this present year.

People! Verily your blood, and your property, and your honour are sacrosanct to you until the (day) you meet your Lord--as sacrosanct as this present day, in this present month, in this present place. Have I communicated? O God, be witness.

Whosoever has received a deposit, he must pay it back to the one how had deposited it with him.

Verily the interest (on the debts) of the time of the pre-Islamic Ignorance is discharged, but you have right to your capitals. Neither you shall oppress nor shall ye be oppressed. God has decreed that there shall be no interest. And verily the first interest I begin with (to discharge) is the interest due to my uncle al-'Abbas

ibn 'Abd al-Muttalib.

Verily the blood shed in the time of the Ignorance is discharged. And the first blood with which we begin (to discharge) is the blood (of my nephew) 'Amir ibn Rabi'a ibn al-Harith ibn 'Abd al-Muttalib.

The traces of the functions of the time of the Ignorance are discharged, except the custodianship of the Ka'ba and the function of providing drinking water (to pilgrims).

The intentional murder shall be retaliated. Semi-international is the one in which one is killed by a baton or a stone. In this there shall be one hundred camels as blood-money whoever claims more he shall be of the people of the days of Ignorance. Hallo! Have I communicated? O God, be witness.

Whereafter, people! Verily Satan has despaired to be worshipped in this your territory, but he would be satisfied if he could be obeyed in things other than this, from among acts which you despise. So take care of him in matters of your religion.

People! The intercalation is only an excess in disbelief; those who disbelieve are led thereby astray : they declare the (month) one year as non-sacred and they declare it one year as sacred, so that they may make up the number of (months) that God has declared as sacred, and to declare sacred what He has made non-sacred. Verily the (computation of) time has turned round to the situation it was on the day that God had created the heavens and the earth. Verily the number of the months, to God, is twelve months, in the prescription of God, on the day He had created the heavens and the earth; of these four are sacred--three

being consecutive and one isolated, viz. Dhu'l-qa'da, Dhu'l hijja and Muharram, and the month of Rajab of the tribes of Mudar which occurs between Jumada'l-aakhira and Sha'ban. Hallo! Have I communicated? O God, be witness.

Whereafter, people! Verily your wives have a right over you, and you have a right over them. Your right over them is that they should not let your beds be trampled by anybody other than you (euphemism for illicit sexual intercourse), and should not let enter your houses those whom you do not like, if not with your permission. Let them not commit ugly things, and if they do, then God has authorized you to reprimand them, and to separate them in beds, and to beat them yet a beating not very hard. If they stop and obey you, then it is incumbent on you to feed them and dress them according to good custom. Be enjoined of good with regard to women, for verily they are like captives with you, possessing nothing for themselves, and you having taken them as a deposit of God, and you permitting yourselves to enjoy their persons by means of a word of God. So fear God with regard to women, and be enjoined of good on their behalf. Hallo, have I communicated? O God, be witness.

People! The Believers are only brethren. And it is not lawful for a man to take the property of his brother if not with full agreement on his part. Hallo, have I communicated? O God, be witness.

So never turn after me into disbelievers, some of you smiting the necks of some others. For verily I leave among you something which if you abide by, you shall not go astray thereafter : the Book of God and the conduct (sunna) of His prophet. Hallo, have I communicated? O God, be witness.

People! Verily your Lord is one, and your ancestor is also one : all of you are descendants of Adam, and Adam was made of clay. The most respectable of you in the sight of God is the one who is most fearful of God. No Arab has any excellence over a non-Arab if not by the fear of God. Hallo, have I communicated? O God, be witness.--People said : Yes. Thereupon he resumed : -- Let the present communicate to the absent.

People! God has apportioned for every heir his part of heritage. It is not lawful to make a testament for an heir. Testament (to others than heirs) is not lawful for more than the third of the property left. The child belongs to the (owner of the) bed (= husband), and the adulterer will only receive stones. Whoever pretends affiliation to other than his father, or clientage to other than his patron, shall incur the malediction of God, of angels, and of men, of all. Of him shall be accepted neither expenditure nor compensation.

Assalamu alaikum (peace be on you)!

177. Ibn Sa'd says that this oration contained also the following two phrases : "People! Hear and obey even if a negro with a mutilated nose is appointed as your commander, this so long as he applies among you the prescriptions of God." And : "Your slaves, your slaves! Feed them as you eat, dress them as you put on. If they commit a fault that you don't want to pardon, then sell these slaves of God, but do not torture them".

178. Of the points touched in the oration, two have often been misunderstood, the interest and the lunar calendar. A few words seem to be called for :

179. Islam wants to place its law on a moral basis, with collaboration and mutual help. After fourteen

hundred years to the promulgation of this interdiction of interest modern science has understood that interest is at the root of all economic ills, and upsets the economic equilibrium of the society : some get too rich, others too poor. So much so that communism also admits that. In fact when the Bolsheviks captured power in Russia, they began by abolishing interest. But soon they required to issue loans and since the preparatory work of inculcating the need of abolishing interest was neglected nobody lent money; and the reform failed as miserably as that of the USA who decided to ban alcohol and could not apply it for more than a couple of years. As we have just remarked above (§171), under financial reforms banks are to be nationalized, and no bank national or foreign is to be permitted to transact on interest: and these state banks should lend money interest-free. For productive enterprises of trade and commerce banks should become partners both for loss and gain. That is what the caliph 'Umar did, who lent money to traders also, as he lent to private individuals for non-productive needs.

180. As to the calendar, the Meccans had a luni-solar calendar : the months began by the sight of the new moon and the lunar year was from time to time readjusted to the solar year by intercalating a 13th month to the year. The Prophet abolished intercalation and restored purely lunar calendar. Seasonable taxes on agricultural harvest were not touched thereby, and tax was paid whenever the harvest was made. But all the other taxes began to be perceived according to the lunar year, which is shorter by eleven days to the solar year. The result is that the government collected in 33 solar years 34 times the annual taxes. Which finance minister would despise that? In spite of paying salaries of the employees also for 34 times the net gain to that state coffers was important. The diversification of taxes in both solar year (for agriculture) and lunar year had the

great advantage that at the end of the fiscal year the State coffers were never short of money, since seasons of collecting taxes differed for both the categories.

Meaning of the Hajj

181. The above sermon was delivered on Friday 9th Dhu'l-hijja 10 H. (6th March 632), and on that very day came the revelation of the most auspicious verse of the Quran (5/3) :

"...This day have I perfected your religion for you, and completed My favour unto you, and have agreed to Islam as your religion..."

If it is historically true that of the four pillars of Islam, the hajj is the last to come, besides the ritual prayer, the fasting and the zakat-tax, it remains to show how it is to envisage spiritually.

182. The visit to the House of God is something unique in the history of religions. Pilgrimage exists practically in all the big religions of the world, yet everywhere, with the exception of Islam, it is an act considered to be meritorious but not obligatory. In Islam alone it is a duty unto all and every Muslim, male or female, once in life. Again, in other religions it is either the tomb of some venerated man to whom homage is paid, or some marvel of nature, like the source of a big river, confluence of rivers, and the like, which inspire awe or admiration, and attract visitors more as tourists than as inspiring piety. In Islam it is the House dedicated to the One, transcendent God, which is visited in Mecca. (The Prophet's tomb is in Madina, and has nothing to do with pilgrimage proper).

183. The word Ka'ba literally means both "square"

and "round", and in fact its ground plan is both : () and is said to represent the shape of a heart. A celebrated saying of God, reported in a *hadith qudsi* (saintly saying) of the Prophet says : "The extent of My heavens and of My earth could not contain Me, but the heart of the Believer could contain Me". The building of the House of God could therefore have no better shape than that of the heart.

184. After their fall from the Paradise, Adam lost trace Eve. After long research, the grace of God willed that they meet at 'Arafat; and from thence they regretted their sin and offered thanks to Almighty. The filial piety is naturally great for us there, and we too think of our sins and demand pardon of the Lord.

185. Another of our spiritual ancestors, Abraham had affirmed loving God Above all else. For testing him, God asked him to immolate his only son, Ismael, the first born in old age. Abraham unhesitating decided to do that. When he was taking the boy to a convenient place, Satan appeared in disguise to tempt him, but Abraham recognized him and chased him by flinging stones on him. A few steps farther, Satan came in another shape and tempted the mother of the boy; she too threw stones on him. Finally he came in yet another shape to tempt the boy, and from it also he received nothing but stones. Thereafter Abraham passed knife on the neck of the boy, but lo! it was a sheep that was agonizing, and the boy was standing safe and sound. God had sent Gabriel to do the miracle. Abraham received the title "friend of God" (*Khalilullah*), and was ordered to ransom his son by sacrificing sheep. Abraham and his successor continue to do that, even in Islam, after these 4000 years, by lapidating the Pillars of Satan and by slaughtering animals, at Mina. After this proof of the preference of God, Abraham was rewarded in the shape

of the birth of a second son, Isaac.

186. Earlier Abraham had given another proof of his fidelity : he had brought his new-born firstling and its mother Hagar from Palestine to the desert of Mecca, and left them there, confiding them to God. Soon when the provisions exhausted, the child began to cry of thirst. The mother ran hither and thither and looked around to find some water, never despairing in the motherly love. God caused the spring of Zamzam to gush out, and saved the life in the desert. The frequentation between the rocks Safa and Marwa is in memory of Hagar's act, and a homage paid to the mother's affection to her child, which is a symbol of God's love for His creatures.

187. The circumambulation, the crux and climax of the hajj, is really the most inspiring to one who thinks of it. Of all the names with which man calls his Lord, nothing explains better his relation with the Lord as the name "king", man himself being the "slave". (Human tongues and human imagination have no better word). If God is our king, (of Quran 62/1), He must have not only treasures (of 63/7), armies (48/4), and a throne (9/129 etc.), but also a kingdom (2/107); the vast kingdom must have a metropolis; and one of the names of Mecca in the Quran (6/92) is in fact *Umm al-qura*, which literally means "mother of cities", metropolis. In the metropolis, there must be a Palace (5/97 : "*al-Ka'bat al-bait al-haram*"). Now, human society has known the necessity of paying homage and oath of allegiance to the sovereign in person. For this reason every obedient subject (believer) goes to the House of the Lord to do the act of allegiance. The Prophet having said : "The Black Stones is the right hand of God on the earth", the believer poses his hands on the representation of the "righthand of God", and then mounts the guard in circumambulating the House of the Lord, to defend it against all the

enemies. He takes seven rounds, the number seven denoting unlimited, (the time is calculated by seven days of the week, which repeat themselves again and again eternally).

188. No wonder if the Service of Worship (salat) is the accession of the Believer to the saintly Presence of God, the hajj of the House of God is the culmination of the submission!

CHAPTER 7

RELATIONS WITH OTHER TRIBES OF ARABI

189. Meccan pagans were the first and foremost enemies of Islam. It was to defend himself against them that the Prophet had created a chain of buffer-states--each tribe constituted an independent State--and gradually encircled Mecca, compelling it in a godly manner voluntarily to accede to the Muslim government. This chain concerned the immediate neighbours around Madina. Neither was this chain complete, much less it exhausted habitations. There was many tribes in Arabia, not less powerful than the Quraish of Mecca, and all were idolatrous, and it remains inexplicable why there was practically no resistance on their part. If the conquest of Mecca required an effort of 21 years and an army of 10,000 strong, the expeditions against other tribes hardly consisted of more than a few scores, or at best a few hundreds, of men. Most of them were rallied in no time. Even highly developed regions, like Yemen, Bahrain, 'Uman, Dumatal-Jandal rallied to Islam so swiftly and so easily that the historian remains perplexed at the phenomenon. For the coastal regions, one of the factors may have been the fact that they were suffering from colonialism and foreign yoke, and Islam came to liberate them, converting them into the ruling community and demanding of them nothing but to give up the senseless worship of man-made idols. For others, perhaps there was no coherence even inside the tribes, and they never mustered their entire forces. Destroying a regional idol temple, breaking the idol itself without provoking "divine" punishment to the profanator

sufficed to dissipate at once the superstitions and show the vanity of the fetiches.

190. The use of arms and the consequent bloodshed was practically non-existent, if one were to meditate over the statistics. The Prophet began "waging war" only on his arrival in Madina, and he died ten years later. The "conquests" of this decade extend over 3 millions of square kilometers, i.e. some 900 kilometers daily for ten years at an average. And during these wars not even two persons from the enemy were killed every month! Muslim losses were even less. Two to three hundred persons killed on the battle field, to conquer as many millions of square kilometers of territory is a thing uncommon--unknown--in world history. The respect of human blood was inherited afterwards by his Rightly Guided caliphs also.

191. We have described above, how the Prophet tried to screen Madina by creating a chain of buffer-states, to protect it particularly from the Meccans. Beyond these bufferstates of allied tribes, there were a host of other tribes, some of whom were hostile to Islam for no apparent cause. The "wars" with them were far less bloody. We shall speak of them now briefly:

192. The Ghatafan-Fazara in the North-East, the Sulaim in the East and the Hawazin in the South-East of Madina, these were cousin, descendants of the same ancestor, Qais:

To classical writers like Ibn Habib, these three tribes--viz (1) Sulaim-Hawazin, (2) Ghatatan (3) A'sur-Muharib--were known under the collective name of *athafi*, i.e. stones of cooking fire on which a pot is placed. A justified name, as we shall see. These were the immediate neighbours of the Muslim state. Those living farther away in the extreme North, extreme East and extreme South of the Arabian Peninsula could come in contact only in the second phase, and when this took place, it meant relations with states outside Arabia: Byzantium and Iran, on account of their colonies in Arabia. Let us begin first with the first group.

Sulaim

193. The Sulaim had close and long-dated relations with Mecca. Three of the grand mothers--from fourth to sixth generation--of the Prophet, bearing all the name of 'Aatika, were Sulaimite. His uncle Abu Talib had contracted alliance with a branch of the Sulaim. All this proved of no avail. May be the relations of the Prophet with the Sulaim deteriorated even before Islam, on account the famous Wars of Profanation (*al-fijar*), which took place between the Meccans and the tribes of Qais, and as a young man, the Prophet had also taken part in one or two of them. There is report (of al-Hazimi, *al-Amakin*, s.v. Burza) that the Sulaim had crowned a certain Malik ibn Khalid ibn Sakhr ibn ash-sharid --hence his surname Dhu't-Taj--and made him their king, yet he fell in the tribal war called "Yawm Burza". In the claim of prophethood by the Meccan Muhammad (peace be with him), they perhaps saw a danger of his future hegemony and perpetual impossibility for them to rule Arabia; and jealousy pushed them to combat Islam. However it may be, the first tension is reported even before the Hijra. The famous idol, al-'Uzza belonged to the tribe of Sulaim; and was venerated by the Ghatafan

also. Its temple was at Nakhla. When the guardian of this temple, a certain Aflah as-Sulami, was on his death bed, Abu Lahab came to pay him a visit, who confided to him his preoccupations: "After my death, the 'Uzza seems to be condemned to loss". Abu Lahab consoled him by saying that he would defend it against Islam.

194. The vested interest of the Sulaim suffered further when a detachment sent by the Prophet from Madina, soon after the Hijra, unwittingly offended the Sulaim. The expedition led by 'Abdallah ibn Jahsh made prisoners of, and plundered a Meccan caravan returning to Mecca, in the "sacred territory of Nakhla". The Prophet did not approve the initiative of the commander, but did also nothing to appease the Sulaim. Two months later when the battle of Badr took place, the Prophet encountered hostility on the part of the Sulaim. So a week after, he went to Qarqarat'ul-Kudr to punish a branch of the Sulaim; and the capture of 500 of their camels in booty poisoned further the relations. Both the Ghatafan and the Sulaim began preparations for attacking Madina. Hence the preventive expeditions of Dhu Amr and of Bahran, with 450 and 300 volunteers respectively, against the same tribe. The enemy fled and escaped pursuit. In the expedition of Buhran, the Prophet stayed on the spot for two long months, trying apparently to reconcile. The saner and older elements were for peace, but the falcons prevailed; and the Prophet returned without success. He continued his efforts, and did succeed with the cousin and neighbouring tribe of Kilab, whose chief invited Muslim missionaries, in the year 4 H., under his personal protection. The peaceful delegation of 40 to seventy men, was treacherously attacked and decimated at Bi'r-Ma'una, to the great sorrow of the Prophet. The situation of Mecca and Khaibar was then preoccupying, so the blood seems to have been shed with impunity. In

spite of the obstinacy of their chiefs, individual Sulaimites began to embrace Islam, and obtained honours on the part of the Prophets, including territorial gifts. Profiting thereby, the Sulaimite Abu'l-'Auja' was sent on a proselytizing mission in the year 7 H. This group was also massacred. Yet only a year later, in the expedition culminating in the conquest of Mecca, a strong contingent of the Sulaimite Muslims, particularly their cavalry, participated along with the Prophet. What was the secret of this mass conversion, the historians have not recorded; may be the accord of material advantages, and hence their conversion was not very sincere at that moment. In fact after the conquest of Mecca, when the Prophet went to fight the Hawazin, (which were the cousins of the Sulaim), the Sulaim fled from the Muslim army; thereafter they refused to pursue the routed Hawazin, and even prevented other Muslims doing that. The Prophet did not despair: from the booty, he lavishly gratified the Sulaim contingent. Gradually the old grudges were forgotten.

Hawazin

195. The foster-mother of the Prophet was the Hawazinite Halma. This tribe got afraid of Islam only after the conquest of Mecca, and suspected that their great town, Ta'if, would also fall in the hands of the idol-breaking Islam, and the temple of the idol Lat in Ta'if would share the fate of the idols of the Ka'ba. But it was too late then for them to stop the march of Islam. Once route at Hunain, the Hawazin resisted the military siege of Ta'if; but isolated as they were then from their Meccan market and other friends, the Ta'ifites embraced Islam a year later, and obtained some concession in matters of religion. The fact is important from the point of view of the method of preaching Islam, so some details seem to be necessary:

196. Their delegation came to Madina, and demanded that their idol, the Lat, should not be touched. They said, they were prepared to believe in the One God, and in Muhammad as His messenger, but wanted to be exempted from the prayer, the zakat-tax and the obligation of military service (Jihad). Further, the interdiction of alcohol, of the fornication-adultery, and of the interest on lent money should not apply to them. Moreover the town of Ta'if should be recognized as a sacred territory, where hunting wild beast and hewing wild trees should be prohibited.

197. For the zakat-tax, for furnishing contingents of volunteers for military expeditions, and for the sanctity of the regions of Ta'if, the Prophet consented, (and we shall presently revert to it). For daily prayers he remarked : It is no religion worth the name which does not prescribe worship of our creator. For sex licence, he put to them the question whether anyone of them would consent that his wife, his sister or his daughter should be violated by a stranger? If not, the woman with whom you want to have illicit relations will also be the wife, sister or daughter of someone who too would not tolerate this dishonour. (The delegation agreed). For interest, he gave a delay of some months, to recuperate old debts, after which no such new transaction would be tolerated. For the temple of Lat, he calmly said : You need not demolish it yourselves; we shall send men from of the deity you fear. For alcohol also the Prophet made no concession. In the absence of details of his reply on the point, it may be surmised that he said that intoxication rendered men lower than beasts.

198. Thereupon the delegation retired for a while for private deliberations. It saw the reasonableness of the counter propositions, and embraced Islam.

199. When the delegation departed, the Madinan Muslims, who were intrigued by the "concessions", asked the Prophet whether the duties of zakat and of jihad had been abrogated. He replied : No, but when these people will be well penetrated by Islam, they will themselves renounce on the exemptions. In fact the Prophet was right; other people will be well penetrated by Islam, they will themselves renounce on the exemptions. In fact the Prophet was right; other peoples taunted the Taifites as second class Muslims; and before the Prophet died two years later, the Taifites began paying the zakat-tax to the Muslim government as any other Muslim; and on the morn of the death of the Prophet, they sent contingents of armed volunteers to Madina, to participate in suppressing the rebellion of apostates that had broken out in certain regions.

200. The destruction of the idol Lat was picturesque. The Prophet sent a Taifite Muslim of long date, al-Mughira ibn Shu'ba, at the head of a small group, including Abu-Sufyan Al-Mughira assembled the Ta'ifites to see the ceremonious destruction of the fetish, and after giving the first blow feigned to suffer : pushed a loud cry and fell as if in swoon. When the insufficiently Islamized individuals had enough rejoiced, he stood up launching and mocking, and with a few more blows finished with the idol. The wavering faith of the few hesitants was so much the more consolidated.

Ghatafan

201. They depended on the town of Khaibar more than any other place for their economic needs, being entirely nomadic, with no groups of them among settled town folk. The tension with their cousins, the Sulaimites, incited them; and to give vent to their resentment, they had recourse to brigandage, pillage, and hit-and-run tactics. But the policy of the Prophet

was large-minded and this touched the simple Bedouins more than any philosophical and learned explanation of Islam. For instance, during a Muslim punitive expedition, at Dhu Amr, the enemy had escaped and there was none to fight. After a rain, the Prophet put off his dress and suspended it on a tree to dry, and lay down to take rest. His companions must have done the same thing, and dispersed hither and thither in the desert. Seeing the Prophet alone, an enemy chief, who had taken refuge on top of a nearby hill, stealthily descended, took hold of the sword of the Prophet, and shouted : "Who will save you now from me?" The Prophet replied unperturbed : "God!" This confidence shattered the simple soul, who began to tremble, and the sword fell from his hand. Now the Prophet caught hold of it, and asked : "Who would save you now from me?" Du'thur, the Bedouin chief, answered : "None!" The Prophet pardoned him, and let him go. Touched by this kind-heartedness, he not only embraced forthwith Islam, but became also an active missionary of the faith among his tribe.

202. Some other branches of the Ghatafan-like Ashja' and 'Amir ibn 'Ikrima--lived nearer to Madina, and lived on the tourist traffic of the passing caravans. They rallied to the Prophet since the early years of the Hijra, and proved useful allies.

203. As long as Mecca and Khaibar remained hostile, the principal Ghatafanite chief, 'Uyaina ibn Hisn al-Fazari, continued to cause pin pricks. But thereafter he too judged prudent to make peace. In consequence, Islam spread rapidly in the region. At the death of the Prophet 'Uyaina apostatized, but only to the captured. He repented, and the caliph Abu-Bakr pardoned him, and this unexpected clemency transformed the rude Bedouin into a sincere Muslim.

CHAPTER 8

RELATIONS WITH THE JEWS

204. One saw Jews living at that time in small colonies from Syria to Yemen and 'Uman, but their stronghold was Khaibar. In Madina they seem to live at sufferance, because in the Constitution of the City-State promulgated by the Prophet they are mentioned, not as independent tribes or clans to become units of the confederation, but as clients of different Arab tribes, either of the Aus or of the Khazraj. They did hail from three main groups : the Qainuqa', the Nadir and the Quraiza, but as there were feuds between them, they were divided in their alliances also, some rallying to the Aus, and others to the enemies of the Aus.

205. The goldsmiths of the Qainuqa' were of a very low morality. Once they undressed a Muslim lady just for a joke. This caused a riot, and the Prophet ordered the culprit clans--not all the Qainuqa'--to quit Madina; and they migrated to Syria.

206. The Nadir are said to have plotted to kill the Prophet when he visited their settlement for administrative affairs. They were besieged, and were similarly ordered to leave Madina, with their properties; they could even recover their debts in the town. They complied but with bad grace, and took the leniency of the Prophet for weakness. They settled in Khaibar, and from there organized the terrible siege of Khandaq (Ditch) of Madina, with the help of the Meccans, the Sulaim, the Ghatafan and many other mercenaries. The

Jews of the Quraiza were still in Madina, and owed much to the Prophet to ameliorate their sort in Madina, where formerly other Jews treated them as of inferior rank, so much so that other Jews paid only half the customary blood-money if they killed someone of the Quraiza; and it was the Prophet who had restored to them human honour and equality. Nevertheless, when the Nadirite agents instigated them, they too treacherously joined hands with the invaders, to upset all defence plans. God saved Muslims. At the end of the battle of the Ditch, they, (the Quraiza), were besieged, and on capitulation, the Prophet still showed them leniency, and asked them to select their own arbitrator, whose decision would be executed as to what punishment should be inflicted to them. A year later Mecca was neutralized by the truce of al-Hudaibiya; and no sooner was this achieved, then the Prophet proceeded to Khaibar with 1500 men, and in the course of some weeks reduced the fortified region of Khaibar, defended by twenty thousand combatants, who employed even catapults and other war gear. The truce of al-Hudaibiya, where the Prophet consented all that the Meccans demanded to some apparent humiliation of the Muslims, is explained by the great Imam as-Sarakhsi in the following terms: "There was a military pact between Khaibar and Mecca--(One in the North, the other in the South of Madina)--and that if the Prophet set out against one of these regions, the other should attack Madina" (of *Mabsut*, X, 86; *Sharh as Siyar al-Kabir*, I. 201). Finding himself between two fires and not possessing sufficient forces to cope simultaneously with both the Prophet wanted at all costs to make peace with one of them, to liquidate the other. He chose Mecca for befriending, went there as pilgrim and there is no exaggeration when the Holy Quran (48/1-3) names the truce of al-Hudaibiya as "manifest victory" and "powerful help", (*fath mubin, nasr aziz*), instead of

207. At the final surrender of the Khaibarians, the Prophet treated them with very great leniency and to persuade the Muslim soldiers also to behave likewise, he married one of the ladies of the Jewish aristocracy who had already secretly embraced Islam. (In fact she had seen in dream that the moon had fallen from the sky in her bosom and Jews had told her that it meant that she would marry Muhammad the ruler of the Arabs). Khaibar Jews becoming relatives of the Prophet, they naturally created for themselves a tender corner in the hearts of the Muslim soldiery. The Prophet let them remain in Khaibar as tenant of the State lands. In Madina too the remaining Jews of Banu 'Uraid among others, received generous treatment, and annuities of considerable importance. So long as they remained peaceful inhabitants, there was no quarrel with them: they enjoyed all the autonomy in religious, juridical and economic matters, and prospered. As "people of God", possessing a revealed Book, they did merit a special treatment, better than mere idolaters, but more than anybody else the people of God must know that one cannot have rights in one-way traffic; if they disregard Divine obligations. God punishes them with so much the more rigour. And His will prevails.

208. When in the year 9 H., the Prophet effected financial reforms, he made some technical differences between Muslims and Judeo-Christians for the payment of taxes. Muslims paid a tax--among other objects--on their savings: hoarded money was penalized, so that money should always be in circulation and fructification. Non-Muslims were exempted from this tax, and insteads paid the capitation tax (*Jizya*), from which, however the poor, the minors, the womanfolk and many others were exempted. Interest on lent money was forbidden to Muslims, not to non-Muslims; but they were required to pay double the rate of Muslims on imports as customs

duty (gumruk). On agricultural lands Muslims paid 10% of the harvest, and non-Muslims paid according to treaties or in cash, apparently there was essentially no difference in the quantity effectively paid as government tax in this respect.

CHAPTER 9

RELATIONS WITH FOREIGN COUNTRIES

a) Byzantium

209. It was reluctantly and for self-defence that the Prophet had had recourse to arms. And when the senseless opposition of the inveterate enemies was neutralized, his only aim and his only activity was to propagate his ideology peacefully, in Arabia, and beyond.

210. On his return from al-Hudaibiya, succeeding in establishing pacific co-existence with Mecca, and without even waiting to capture Khaibar--much less capturing Mecca itself--he began at once sending missionaries. Among other destinations, he sent early in 7 H. letters to the rulers of Byzantium, Egypt, Abyssinia and Iran, inviting them to embrace Islam. To go to these foreign countries, he selected such persons who had already visited these countries, and understood a bit of their languages also.

210/a. Among the recipients of the letters of the Prophet there was Heraclius. Of rather humble origin, a successful coup d'Etat had brought him to power in Constantinople. He had just won a great victory over the Iranians and definitely chased them out of his realm the greater part of which they had occupied. Naturally the

emperor Heraclius was not in a mood to "humiliate" himself before an unknown member of the much despised Arabs part of whose country had fallen as colony under his purview. As we shall presently see, Heraclius crucified a prefect of his for having embraced Islam, protected another who had murdered a Muslim envoy in flagrant violation of international practice, and opposed with a big army the small punitive expedition that the Prophet had sent to Mu'ta, behaving like an unprincipled tyrant. According to Muslim historians, a high priest, autocrator (daughter of the Arabs) showed his inclination for the teaching of Islam, but the mob lynched him. This may have constituted a further reason to make the emperor indifferent to Islam in spite of terrifying dreams this superstitious monarchs had seen at that time, and the indications he had found in the illustrated books fore-telling the fortune which he possessed and constantly consulted. The original of the letter of the Prophet to Heraclius was in Spain for long centuries; it has reappeared now but it remains to study scientifically whether it is authentic.

211. Replies were negative, more or less politely. The greatest prejudice and conservatism that one finds in human society concern matters of religion and metaphysical dogmas. But a convinced preacher does not despair; if at first he does not succeed, he tries again and again, both by direct and in direct means. Byzantines and Iranians had colonies both in side and outside Arabia, subjugating Arabs and, as usual treating them as second class subjects and inferior race. The Prophet decided to contact them before contacting directly the Greeks.

212. Already in the time of St Paul, Arabs lived not only far and wide but had carved out States as far in the North as Damascus (II Corinthians XI, 32), the ruler at

that time being a certain Aretas (Harith). In the time of the Prophet it was the Arab tribe of Ghassan which lived in the same region, and was Christianized. The Prophet sent letters to different chiefs of this tribe, inviting them to Islam:

213. First, to al-Harith ibn Abi Shamir. He seems have rejected the invitation; but he died soon, in 8 H. His successor Jabala ibn al-Aiham received then a similar invitation. Reports are divergent as to his conversion. The Prophet sent a letter of invitation to the prefect of Busra; the envoy al-Harith ibn 'Umar al-Azdi was captured and put to death by Shurahbil ibn 'Amr al-Ghassani. It was in flagrant violation of international law. The Prophet demanded reparation, and punishment of the culprits, but the emperor Heraclius instead sent as much as hundred thousand soldiers of those who had been recruited to fight Iran and were not yet demobilized--to meet Muslim menace. The Prophet had sent a force of 3000, by land and some reinforcements by sea, which met the imperial army at Mu'ta, in Transjordan. The number of the enemy did not terrify Muslims, yet they lost two superior officers, the commander-in-chief Zaid-ibn-Haritha (the adopted son of the prophet), and his second Ja'far at-Taiyar son of Abu Talib, (Prophet's cousin). The army then elected Khalid ibn al-Walid. He inflicted such losses on the enemy that it did not dare to pursue the Muslim who retired safely to Madina. Thereupon the Prophet organized the grand expedition of Tabuk, and led it himself, in 9 H., an army of 30,000 strong, constructing mosques wherever he camped. He succeeded in clearing the whole of Northern Arabia and southern Palestine: He occupied Dumatal-Jandal, Maqna, Ailah, Jarba and Adhruh, which all had been evacuated by the Byzantines. The port of Ailah was of particular importance. The Arab population of the region;

although Christianized, seems to have revolted against the tyrannical Byzantines, and was glad to live under the tolerant Muslim rule. So the occupation was definite, and the emperor could not intervene. The situation of the frontier was naturally not stabilized, and another expedition was to set out, a year had half later, on the day when the Prophet breathed his last. The caliph Abu Bakr decided to maintain the decision, and Usama, son of the commander Zaid, killed in Mu'ta, led the army and pushed further to the North the Muslim frontier, and the conquest of Palestine was soon completed; but that does not belong to the frame-work of our work.

214. Another addressee of the Prophet, the Arab prefect of Ma'an, embraced Islam, but he was beheaded by order of the emperor Heraclius.

Egypt

215. Egypt was a Byzantine province. When the Iranians occupied it, they gave some satisfaction, to the Copts who were grumbling under the sectarian persecutions of the Byzantine government. They nominated a new chief of the Copts--the title Muqauqis seems to be of Persian origin--but when they suffered the heavy defeat at Nineva at the hands of Heraclius, they were obliged to evacuate Egypt also. It seems that it was during the interregnum that the Prophet wrote a letter to the "chief of the Copts", inviting him to Islam. A courteous and very friendly reply came, although the main object, conversion of the Muqauqis was not realized. Among the presents of the Muqauqis which the Muslim envoy brought to Madina, there were two to four slave girls also. One of them, Maria, became the mother of Ibrahim son of the Prophet. The name of the sister of Maria is given as Sirin, which is a purely Persian

name. May be both were Persian, Maria having been converted to Christianity, or that the girls had a Persian father and a Coptic (Egyptian mother). We have no details, except that Maria gladly accepted the invitation of the Prophet to embrace Islam, and hence the honour the Prophet did her.

216. The original of the letter of the Prophet to Muqauqis is preserved, and is now exhibited in the Topkapi Museum at Istanbul.

Abyssinia

217. Separated from the Yemen by the narrow strait of Babul-Mandab, it had had intimate economic relations with Mecca, since long before Islam. It is said that the persecutions of the Christians at the hand of a Jewish prince, Dhu-Nuwas was so resented by the Christians of Abyssinia that they invaded Yemen and occupied it, and after some rivalry and bloodshed among the conquering commanders, it was Abraha who became viceroy of the king of Abyssinia in Yemen. His religious zeal knew no limits, and it was he who wanted to destroy the Ka'ba, considered by him as the chief obstacle in the way of Christianity in Arabia. He had an elephant in his army with which he invaded Mecca. He passed by Ta'if, but spared the temple of Lat, because the Ta'ifites offered him guides to show the route to Mecca. The surat 105 of the Quran was revealed at a time when several of those who had personally witnessed the invasion were still alive and in spite of their hostility to Islam, did not refute the contents of the Surat, which says that the "people of the Elephant was completely routed by swarms of bird which threw on them pebbles". It was in that very year that the Prophet was born.

218. Soon after the Persian invaded Yemen and

chased out the Abyssinians with the help of the grumbling Yemenites.

219. Among the several recipients of the letters of the Prophet, inviting them to Islam, there was also the Negus of Abyssinia, but relations of Islam with Abyssinia date from very much earlier. As we have mentioned above, about five years after the beginning of the missionary activity of the Holy Prophet at Mecca, the few converts found such unbearable conditions in their mother land that they decided to take refuge abroad, in Abyssinia. We have also referred to a letter of introduction which the Prophet seems to have given to his cousin Ja'far ibn Abu Talib, addressed to the Negus. In the years that followed, Meccans sent two delegations to demand "extradition" of the Meccan refugees, although without avail, and that during the second of these attempts the Prophet had also sent an envoy to counteract the Meccan machination. Abyssinian histories are lacking for this period, and so we do not know whether the Negus who gave asylum to the Muslim refugees and the one who ten years later received the second Meccan delegation was the same person. Presumably he was the same, and his relations with the Prophet were very intimate. History records that he was the recipient of a letter of the Prophet inviting him to Islam. (The original of this letter has come down to us, and exists at present at Damascus). He is said to have embraced Islam in his individual capacity, without being able to persuade his countrymen to do likewise. The event is attested by the fact that according to al-Bukhari, when this Negus died, the Prophet celebrated a service of funeral prayer for him in *absentia* at Madina. The Prophet sent a letter to his successor also, but apparently without success. However many Abyssinians had embraced Islam, including a son of the Negus, who later settled in Madina, as client of

the family of the Prophet.

220. It may be pointed out that Abyssinia is not described as a colony of Byzantium, but an ally and friend of the Byzantines, presumably on account of the community of religion both were Christians at that time.

221. Individual Abyssinians are met with in Arabia. The muazzin of the Prophet, the venerated Bilal is said to be Habashi (Abyssinian). Another person is Yasar, from Nubia, and became a servant of the Prophet after he had liberated him. But the origin of these individuals in Arabia is not known. Were they kidnapped and sold as slaves, or something else was in the background, it is hard now for us to determine.

IRAN

222. Similar to Byzantium is the story of Iran and of its Arabian colonies. Arabs were bad in their mutual relations, but they had a very high sense of honour, and so proved the best and most loyal allies. So were the Ghassan with Byzantium, and so were the people of Hira with Iran. The ruler of the allied State of Hira had inspired so much confidence in the Iranian royal family that the crown prince Bahram-Gur was sent there as a child to be reared up, instead of remaining in the capital, Mada'in (Ctesiphon). In the generations to come, the situation changed: an emperor wanted that the ruler of Hira should send his daughter to the imperial harem, and on refusal, the ruler was called to Mada'in and was put to death. Arabs revolted. But the punitive expedition sent by the emperor was decimated at Dhu-Qar, in Southern Iraq. This took place about the same time as the battle of Badr. It is related that the watch word of the Arabs during this battle Dhu-Qar was "Ya Muhammad" (O Muammad). When the news reached

the Prophet, he is reported to have exclaimed : "This is the first time that the Arabs have taken their revenge from the Persians, and it is by me that they have obtained victory". The Prophet had a high opinion of the just rule of the late emperor Anushirwan, but he did not like at all their worship of fire and other innovations degrading the religion preached by Zoroaster. We have an echo of it in the Quran (30/2-4) : Before the Hijra of the Prophet to Madina, the Iranians had invaded the Byzantine territory, occupying as far as Syria, Palestine and Egypt; the Quran said : "The Byzantines have been defeated in the neighbouring land, but in a few years they shall be victorious". the Christians were considered nearer to Muslims in religion, and the Zoroastrians nearer to the idol-worshippers of Mecca. Hence the reactions.

223. When in the year 7 H. the Prophet sent a letter of proselytism to Chosroes--and its original has come down to us--it is hard to say whether Khusro-Parviz received the letter or one of his successor, because at that very moment the Persians were completely routed at Nineva, their emperor was assassinated by his own son, and there was chaos and rapid change of occupants of the throne in the capital. Anyhow the Muslim envoy was ill-treated and sent back with insults. In a Hadith recorded by at-Tirmidhi, it is said that a female ruler of Iran sent an embassy to Madina along with some presents to the Prophet, trying to repair the harm done by the previous emperor. This empress may have been Buran Dukht, who ruled for a short time, and was frightened by the fact that there was revolt in the Persian colonies in Arabia.

224. In fact despairing of the emperor, the Prophet had turned his attention to the Persian colonies in Arabia--as he had done in case of the Byzantines--where

not only the population but very many functionaries were Arabs. Yemen, 'Uman, Bahrain (not the modern island of this name, but the modern Alhasa province on the Eastern coast of Saudi Arabia), and the regions to the extreme North-East of the Peninsula come thus in question.

Yemen

225. The situation in Yemen in particular was serious. A country of advanced culture and glorious past--where civilized states existed before the foundation of Athens and Rome, and just a generation before the Prophet of Islam, there was an empire whose territory had included not only the Arabian Peninsula but also vast territories conquered on Byzantines and Sasanians--was actively agitating against the foreign yoke of the Iranians; and there were xenophobe plots to murder all the Persians, settlers as well as officials and soldiers, in order to recover the independence. The efforts of the Prophet at this juncture to proselytize were crowned with considerable success : first Khalid ibn al-Walid, and later 'Ali were sent there on peaceful missions. If many pagan tribes embraced Islam easily, the Christians of Najran too found it expedient to obtain peace in subordination; we shall revert to it. The intelligent Persian governor, Badhan also abandoned willingly fire-worship and became a very sincere Muslim. The Prophet maintained him as governor, to be succeeded by his son, Shahr, when Badhan died sometime later. This must have procured security to many Persians living in Yemen. The Prophet sent a host of functionaries from Madina, from among the most pious Muslims, some of them even Yemenites, like Abu Musa al-Ash'ari. They served as judges, teachers, tax-collectors and general administrators. Mu'adh ibn Jabal, whose mosques exists even today in the town of Janad, was even sent as

inspector-general of education in all Yemen, and he travelled from district to district, organizing Islamic teaching. A few detachments were sent to demolish the more venerated fetish temples, without incurring least wrath on their part, and this gave a final blow to superstitious fears of the simple folk. In no time practically the entire Yemen was rallied to Islam, individual Jews and the Christianized tribe of the Najran excepted.

226. The Christian of Najran were highly organized in religious matters. Before Islam we see there even foreign teachers, such as the Italian priest Gregentius, which had deepened their religious knowledge. Under the Jewish persecution of king Dhu-Nuwas (the *ashab al-ukhdud* of the Quran 85/4) had also rendered them more fanatically attached to their faith. They sent a delegation to Madina, consisting among others of a bishop and a vicar (second priest), which shows the well-organized hierarchy. In Madina they seem to have come with the hope of converting the Prophet to their trinitarian religion and cult of the cross. So they had discussions of dogmatic questions. During the negotiations, it was time to celebrated their mass; they wanted to go to their camp for it, but the Prophet had such a high sense of hospitality that he said : If you like, you may even pray here in the mosque! The historians say : They turned to the East and prayed; probably they took out their crucifixes also for adoration. The Muslims were looking at them with curiosity. Thereafter they came back to continue discussions. The Prophet gave them replies which silenced them, and added : If you are not satisfied with these reasonable replies, let us refer it to God : let us pray to God to decide forthwith and invoke curse of God on the one who affirms the lie from us both, on him and on his family and children (of Quran 3/61). They retired to deliberate in private, and the

saner counsel prevailed : If Muhammad is really the messenger of God, the curse of such a person will condemn us to perdition for ever in both the worlds; better make peace with him, and profit by his toleration! So they voluntarily acceded to the Muslim State as non-Muslim subject, and obtained a character which conferred on them autonomy, both religious and administrative, so much so that even the nomination of their religious dignitaries, such as bishops and priests, belonged to them community, and did not require confirmation by the Muslim State. He even decreed that they need no more pay the interest to their creditors, but only the capital of the loans. Naturally he asked them not to take interest themselves either in future. All was reduced to writing, and the document has come down to us.

227. Numerous other tribes of Yemen also sent delegations to Madina, and embraced Islam. There was no war, and this great region was rallied to Islam in two to three years' time.

'Uman

228. 'Uman, is South-East Arabia, was a State where two brothers, Jaifar and 'Abd, sons of al-Julanda, ruled conjointly. On the invitation of the Prophet, they embraced Islam; and in conformity to his promise, the Prophet maintained them in power, thus indicating that joint rule is also permissible in Islam. He however attached to them a Muslim Resident, who occupied with the affairs of the Muslim subjects, teaching etc.

229. The region had great economic importance. Its numerous ports and international annual fairs now added to the prestige and power of the Muslim State.

230. The tribe of 'Abd al-Qais seems to have been independent of Jaifar. For they sent a separate delegation, directly to negotiate with the Prophet in Madina. It was agreeably surprised to learn from the Prophet that he had travelled far and wide in their country, and had passed considerable time there (naturally before Islam), and remembered many persons of whom he even demanded latest news from the delegates. All ended happily, and Bukhari says, the first mosque--after that of Madina--where Friday prayer was celebrated was at Juwatha, in the territory of the tribe of 'Abd al-Qais.

231. The region had great economic importance. The annual fairs, held in Mushaqqar and Daba had international attraction. Daba was "one of the two major ports of Arabia", and in its fair not only the Arabs of all parts brought their merchandises, but even "the Chinese, the people of Hind and of Sind, and people from the East and the West" who eagerly participated in it. The Chinese came in their junks (boats) directly from their far off country, and created such an impression by their industry, that they have elicited from the Prophet the celebrated saying "Seek knowledge even by going to China". When the region was liberated from colonial yoke, the Prophet appointed naturally a separate governor, a local Muslim, for the port and market town of Daba.

Bahrain

232. The modern island of Bahrain, to the East of the Arabian Peninsula, in the Arabo-Persian Gulf, was called in those days Uwal; and by Bahrain--literally: two seas--one understood the Alhasa district of the mainland, and probably the Peninsula of Qatar was also included therein. Qatar in particular separates the Gulf into two,

creating thus "two seas". Be that as it may, the Arab governor of the region, al-Mundhir ibn Sawar embraced Islam, and was a very enthusiastic functionary. Half a dozen and more letters of his correspondence with the Prophet have been recorded in history, including one whose original has also come down to us; it was first published in ZDMG of Berlin.

Samawa

233. The tribe of Tamum, of the North-Eastern Arabia, embraced Islam rather easily. Further North, the Southern Iraq was also inhabited by Arab tribes, including the famous State of Hira (modern Kufa). Close to the capital Mada'in, the Iranian grip was stronger than that in the colonies in South and in East Arabia. Nevertheless several branches of the tribe Lakhm--which governed the state of Hira--embraced Islam, and the letter patents they received from the Prophet have been quoted in history.

234. To the South-East of Hira (Kufa) lies the region of Samawa. A letter of the Prophet is recorded, addressed to "Nufatha ad-Di'li king of Samawa", without further details. Being of Arab origin, there is greater chance of his having embraced Islam, to liberate himself from the Iranian grip. But one cannot be sure of that.

INDIA

235. Has the Prophet of Islam had relation with India? Nothing is sure, yet nothing is impossible either. Arab traders frequented the ports of Sindh and Malabar even before Islam. Indian traders also visited the annual fair of Daba, in South-East Arabia (of Ibn Habib, *al-Muhabbar*, p. 265), and most probably also those of Yemen, since (of Ibn Hisham, p. 42) when the Yemenite

chief Saif ibn Dhi Yazan informed the Persian emperor that his country was occupied by "crows", and asked for help, the Kisra had inquired : "which crows? Of Abyssinia or of Sindh?" This could not have occurred to the mind of the emperor unless there were strong ties between India and Yemen. As to Daba, Muhammad of holy memory seems to have visited personally (of Ibn Hanbal, IV, 206 : "I have trampled widely your country", and he names Mushaqqar and other localities of the region, in two traditions reported by the author). Hence no wonder, when a delegation of the Balharith tribe of Yemen came to Madina, the Prophet asked : "Who are these people who look like Indians?" (of Ibn Hisham, p. 960; Ibn Sa'd, I/ii, p. 72, also Nasa'iy 25 : 41). According to Ibn Hanbal (II, 229), the Yemenite Abu Huraira used to say : "The Prophet has promised us to expedition of India; if I perish therein, I shall be one of the best martyrs, and if I return safe, I shall remain the same freed slave Abu Huraira". A more refreshing tradition attributes to the Prophet the saying : "I feel the fresh breeze coming from India".

236. Not only the people but even the religions of India seem to have been referred to, in the life of the Holy Prophet, as 'Abd'ul-Karim al-Jili among the classical authors, and the late Professor Maulana Syed Manazir Ahsan Gilani among our contemporaries have thought.

237. So the name of the prophet Dhu'l-Kifi (literally : one who is of Kifi) is interpreted as "of Kapila-Vastu"--the birth place of Gautama Buddha--Kapila being Arabicized into Kifi. Another interpretation is that "Kifi" literally "nourishment", is the translation of "Suddho Dana", the name of the father of Buddha. Further in the Surat 95 of the Quran, we read :

"By the flag-tree, and by the olive-tree, and by the Mount of Sinin, and by his protected City..."

-- There is unanimity among commentators that "this City" is Mecca, "mount Sinin" is Sinai of Moses, Mount of Olives refers to Jesus. As to fig tree, everybody knows the Bodi trees, the tree of savage fig, under which Gautama Buddha received his first revelation. Fig tree has had importance in the life of no known prophet.

238. As to the Brahmanism, in the Surat XX, 85-97, there is the story of a goldsmith Samiri, with express reference to "untouchability" (*la misas*). The raja Samiri (the Zamorin of the Europeans) is still well-known in Calicut, Malabar, where his family ruled even under the British. Samiri cannot refer to the Samaritan of the Bible since he was posterior to Moses, whereas the goldsmith Samiri was in the Jewish camp along with Moses and Aaron.

239. I terminate this introductory excursion by referring to two works of the erudite Ghulam 'Ali Azad Bilgami (of on him *Encyclopaedia of Islam*) : Firstly the introduction to his biographical dictionary *Subhat'ul-Marjan fi Athar Hindustan*, and secondly his monograph *Shamamat'ul-'Anbar fima warad 'an al-Hind'an Sayid-al-Bashar*.

240. There is a very old tradition in Malabar, South-West Coast of India, that Chakrawati Farmas, one of their kings, had observed the splitting of the moon, that celebrated miracle of the Prophet at Mecca, and learning on inquiry that there was a prediction of the coming of a Messenger of God from Arabia, he appointed his son as regent and set out to meet him. He embraced Islam at the hand of the Prophet, and when returning home, at the direction of the Prophet, died in the port of Zafar,

Yemen, where the tomb of "the Indian king" was piously visited for long centuries. An old MS in the India office Library, London (N^o Arabic 2807, fols. 152-173) speaks of it at length. There is reference to it in Zainuddin al-Ma'bari, *Tuhfat'ul-Mujahidin fi Ba'd Akhbar al-Purtugaliyin* also (its Portugese translation is much better than the English one; Urdu translation is incomplete).

241. We shall speak less of Ratan Hindi (of Ibn Hajar, *Isaba* N^o 2759) and of Sarabatak Hindi (ibid N^o 3739), respectively of the 4th and 8th century of Hijra, who pretended having been one of the Companions of the Prophet and survived during all those long centuries; their contemporaries had found in them mere mystification.

TURKESTAN

242. There is even less to relate about the Turkish people. In his *Ansab al-Ashraf* (I, 485), Baladhuri reports that the first woman martyr in Islam, assassinated by Abu Jahl was Sumaiya, mother of 'Ammar ibn Yasir, that her real name was Bamikh and that she originated from Kaskar, Iran. Pamikh (modern : Pamuk), meaning cotton, is a Turkish woman's name. If philology could be considered as a proof, she would be considered as of Turkish origin. May God bless her for her fervour. Like India, Turkestan too has known a certain maklaba ibn Malkan al-Khwarizmi (d. 311 H.), who had pretended to have been one of the Companions of the Prophet, with a long life, (of Ibn Hajra, *Isaba*, N^o 8126)

CHINA

243. On China there is the well-known saying of the

Prophet : "Seek knowledge even by going to China". There is reason to believe that the Prophet had personally met the Chinese, and was impressed not only by their affirmation that they had to travel long months on boat, but also by their industry. On the one hand Mas'udi (of *Muruj adh-Dhahab*, I, 308) records that Chinese junk boats visited Bahrain and 'Uman before Islam. On the other hand, describing the fair of Daba, Ibn Habib (loc. cit.) says : It was one of the two major ports of Arabia, and its annual fair was visited by people of Hind, Sindh, China, and of the East and West...."

244. The Chinese affirm that the Prophet had sent an envoy to China for inviting the ruler to embrace Islam, that the ambassador Abu 'Ubaida returned later to China again and died there. For the inscription on his tomb at Singan-Fu, see Wen Leang Wou, *Inscriptions religieuses*, Peking 1957; of also Broomhall Marshal, *Islam in China*, p. 66, 83-90.

CHAPTER 10

ORGANIZATION OF THE COMMUNITY

254. The birth-place of the Prophet, Mecca, was in pre-Islamic days a well-organized City-State. There was a collegial government or oligarchy with ten "ministers", hereditarily belonging to the ten most important tribes living in the town, this for the internal administration, and some "co-opted ministers" for "international collaboration", particularly for the organization of the Hajj which was not a purely local affair.

246. As to the local administration, the following was the situation at the dawn of Islam :

1) Of the Banu Hashim, al-'Abbas (uncle of the Prophet) was the custodian of the well of Zamzam, and in charge of furnishing drinking water to people during the pilgrimage. He also occupied himself with maintaining order in the courtyard of the Ka'ba, so that its dignity should not be violated.

2) Of Banu Taim, Abu-Bakr was in charge of *ashnaq*, that is determining the amount to be paid to a victim in cases of tort and other penal cases.

3) Of the Banu 'Adi, 'Umar was in charge of *sifaramunafara* (embassy and contestation), which we may translate as foreign minister, since his function was that, if the Meccans wanted to send an ambassador to negotiate, it was he who did the work; and if there was a contestation or challenge to the priority of the Meccans, it was he who represented the town.

4) Of Banu Umaiya, Abu Sufyan, was the custodian of 'uqab or the military flag. At the occasion of a war, the custodian held this flag, unless someone else was unanimously selected as the commander-in-chief. This happened mostly in case of a war in company of allies.

5) Of Banu 'Abd ad-Dar, 'Uthman ibn Talha was the custodian of the *liwa'* or tribal flag. (The difference between 'uqab and *liwa'* is not very clear. May be, the 'uqab was used in case of large mobilization, and *liwa'* for limited and smaller detachments). The same person was in charge of *dar annadwa* (house of parliament), where all the aged citizens were invited to participate for consultation. Persons of forty and more years alone could participate, with rare exceptions for the younger. This seems to be a sort of lower chamber of the parliament.

6) Of Banu Asad, Yazid ibn Zam'a (a parent of Khadija, wife of the Prophet), was in charge of *mashura* (consultation). This seems to be the upper chamber of the parliament, since it is said that when some resolution was adopted, it was presented to this functionary for ratification.

7) Of Banu Makhzum, Khalid ibn al-Walid was in charge of *qubba* (or canopy held over the idol in procession), and of *a'inna* (or reins of the horse on which the deity was placed during a ceremonial procession). And this function implied the office of commanding the cavalry during the war. He had an assistant also, and these were the two hipparchs, to lead two cavalry regiments, one on the right wing and the other on the left wing of the army.

8) Of Banu Naufal, al-Harith ibn 'Amir was in

charge of *rafada* (contribution or tax), a sort of finance minister and treasurer, who collected contributions of the citizen and spent particularly in hajj season on pilgrims in difficulty.

9) Of Banu Jumah, Safwan ibn Umaiya was in charge of the *azlam* (divination arrows). when a person could not decide a difficult problem, he left the decision to God, and whichever arrow (of yes, no etc.) came out, he abided by it. One had to pay for such consultations.

10) Of Banu sahm, al-Harith ibn Qais was in charge of arbitration and also guardian of the offerings made to the temple (Ka'ba). A sort of judge in civil cases, as distinct from penal cases, falling under N° 2 above.

247. Of the co-opted members, the engineer-architect was a descendent of a certain Hamala ibn 'Auf ibn 'Amir, who was originally from the South-Arabian tribe of Azd-Shanu'a, but was a domiciled Meccan.

248. Another was for calendar, and occupied with the technical question of determining the year in which the intercalation should take place and a 13th month should be added in the lunar year, in order to make the lunar year coincide with the solar year and the season should fall in the same lunar months always. The object was that the hajj should come in a certain season (apparently at the beginning of the spring). In the time of the Prophet, this function was entrusted to the family of Malik ibn Kinana (and the official concerned was called Qalammas).

249. Yet other was to organize and lead the people at 'Arafat. This hereditary official hailed from the tribe of Ghauth ibn Murr.

250. Another occupied the responsibility of controlling the pilgrims at Muzdalifa and leading them therefrom the Mina; and he hailed from the tribe of 'Adwabn ibn Jadila.

251. Lastly there was a person from the tribe of Murra ibn 'Auf, but his function has not been described by the historians.

252. The following genealogical table will give an idea of their relationships with each other; (the family of the architect alone could not be given here, since he belonged to the South Arabian branch of Arabs, not included in this table):

253. When Islam began, it was a State in a State : the Muslims lived in the city state of Mecca, yet had recourse solely to the Prophet for all their affairs, and this latter possessed all the attributes of a sovereign except the territory.

254. When he migrated to Madina in 622, he was acknowledged a Messenger of God by a handful of men, from among the Madinans and refugees from Mecca, neither the whole region was then Islamicized nor had he any political power. Worse than that, there was no State in the region and no government : every tribe or branch of tribe was fully independent of all other tribes, not only of other parts of Arabia but even those of the region of Madina; and there were internecine feuds among these tribes. But the region was fertile and rich in sweet subsoil water - permitting agriculture and horticulture. When the Prophet succeeded in uniting the local tribes and organized them in a City-State, it became more powerful than Mecca, because it was more self-sufficient. There are no statistics, but certain indications permit to suppose that at the beginning of the Hijra, there lived about ten thousand people, both Arabs and their Jewish clients. Soon after the Hijra the Prophet ordered to write down for him a list of all those who had embraced Islam, men as well as women. According to al-Bukhari, this census report showed 1500 names. Till the conquest of Mecca in the year 8 H., it was the policy of the Prophet to demand individual converts as well as smaller groups to migrate to Madina, for security. In 632, when the Prophet died, the majority of the Jews had left the region and, with the accumulation of the new immigrants, it may be supposed that the population of Madina had risen from 15 to 20 thousand souls.

255. During this lapse of time, as we have seen

above, the Prophet succeeded in founding a City-State, which soon became a State and even an Empire, extending over the whole of Arabia and Southern parts both of Iraq and Palestine. Since there was no State previously, every administrative organ was to be created according to needs and improved by experience. The administration of the City-State became the central government, and each new tribe that embraced Islam became, along with its territory, a province. It was the policy of the Prophet to nominate local people for administration, the former chief of the tribe, if he embraced Islam; someone else of the tribe, if the chief retarded. This was naturally much more economical than sending functionaries from the capital requiring salaries. It was also preferable psychologically, since the notion of being governed and dominated by "strangers" had no chance of taking root. To these tribal chiefs, letters-patent were given either to maintain them in the enjoyment of their former possessions--of lands and waters--or new fiefs were accorded in their locality. It may look like a feudal system, but the indirect government was indispensable since the population was nomadic. Of course in more fertile regions of Arabia, in Yemen, 'Uman, Bahrain etc., there were veritable States, and the Prophet did not disturb them. There were chiefs of tribes under him and there were also kings paying him homage, and enjoying much autonomy.

256. The constitution of the State which the Prophet governed was therefore complex, and direct or indirect way of ruling varied from place to place. It cannot be considered as a unitary form, may be federal and even confederal. The central government was monocratic, but not despotic. Consultations were intense and constant. There was no question of elections, but chiefs of tribes were the natural representatives of the respective tribes. Even the

general public was present during the consultation, since normally the Prophet put the question to all those who were present in the mosque, after a prayer. Both chiefs and ordinary members of the tribes could give their opinions. Rare were the cases of secret consultation, particularly in case of war or threat of war and rare also the votes. Once the Prophet wanted to know whether a booty already divided--more precisely the enemy persons enslaved--should or should not be cancelled and returned to the original owners, since the enemy had repented and hand embraced Islam. Opinion seemed to be divided. thereupon the Prophet charged persons to consult and report the opinion of each and every individual in the army. The overwhelming majority was for gratuitous liberation, yet a few refused to give up their share of the booty. Thereupon the Prophet ordered that the booty should be returned, yet those soldiers who refused to do that, received monetary compensation from the State treasury and were obliged to part with their share anyhow. The fact that the Prophet nominated or recognized the chiefs of the units, tribes or states, implied naturally that he could depose and replace them by others of his choice when necessary. Thus in spite of the heterogeneity, there was a sort of personal union between all parts of the country.

257. We are not discussing the Muslim State of the time of the caliphate, but of the time of the Prophet. The Prophet had a unique personality, everybody was convinced that he receives Divine revelations. Naturally there could be no appeal if he said : This is the order of God. The result is that no walk of life escaped his prerogatives : religion, politics, morality, social order and all else.

258. When the Prophet founded the City-State of Madina, it appears that he considered it as a government

of Mecca in exile, a *de jure* government. How to explain otherwise that when he leads an army, he confides his *liwa* (flag) to a Muslim of the tribe of 'Abd ad-Dar, when he wants to send an ambassador, to negotiate with Meccans, it is 'Umar that he invites to do the work, and when Khalid ibn al Walid embraces Islam, he is the commander of Muslim cavalry. The custodianship of the well of Zamzam will remain in the hand of al-Abbas. And as we have seen above, these were the hereditary "ministers" of these functions at Mecca.

259. Naturally when administrative work increased, with the expansion territory and relations with large number of tribes, secretaries were to be employed and even paid.

260. The mosque of the Prophet, at Madina, was the central mosque, with its residential university of the Suffa; and besides the Prophet himself many persons taught there to the beginners and to the advanced. There we find one or two muazzins, someone to light lamps there during the night and sweep and keep it clean. But that was not the only mosque, there were nine others already during the life time of the Prophet, and the saying of the Prophet : "learn from your neighbours" implies that there were schools in these smaller mosques also.

261. In the beginning when the Prophet received some gifts for charity, he distributed at once; later we find there a store room, the nucleus of the Bait al-Mal, and Bilal, who was in charge of it, spent according to the directions of the Prophet. When zakat became obligatory and regular, the Bait al-Mal received not only money, but also sheep and camels, date fruits and other products of the harvest. The number of employees naturally increased, not only as shepherds etc., but also

to register the income and expenditure of the treasury. For the preparation of the expedition of Tabuk, he even demanded zakat in advance.

262. To meet the increasing need of the defence service, jihad or participation in military service become an obligation 'on the sufficient number' (fard kifaya). But calling volunteers and waiting till the required number was reached and till these people assembled, took time and was not always convenient. So already in the time of the Prophet the nucleus of a permanent army began to exist. In his (Sharh) as-Siyar al-Kabir (§ 1978), Imam Muhammad ash-Shaibani writes :

"...In the time of the Prophet, the income of zakat was kept separately, and had its particular employees; and booty separately, with its particular employees. And the Prophet spent the zakat income on orphans, old persons, and poors. When the orphan attained puberty and military service become incumbent on him, he was transferred from the beneficiaries of the zakat to that of the booty; and if this youngman did not like military service, he received nothing from the zakat either, and was ordered to earn his own livelihood."

263. With the increase of population, not only new markets in Madina became necessary, but also inspection and control. A lady, well-versed in reading and writing, Shifa bint 'Abdallah (a parent of 'Umar) was charged "with some function in the market". In the absence of precision, it may be surmised that she may be either inspector general of the market, or collector of customs duty from the merchants, or else inspector of women merchants. As to import customs, a reform came in due course. As in later day Venice, rates of import tax

differed according to whether the merchant was a citizen, a resident alien, or a foreigner, and they paid 2½, 5 and 10% respectively.

264. In the beginning there was no permanent chancellery, later a seal was engraved for the Prophet's letters and grants, interpreters and secretaries well-versed in foreign languages were trained, employees differed for the codification of the Quran, for writing letters of the Prophet, for noting income and expenditure, for military administration and the like.

265. Military training was encouraged by all means. The Prophet attended in person race course, and distributed prizes to winners. Shooting arrows as exercise of precise targeting, throwing stones, and several such things were encouraged by the presence of the Prophet among the youth.

266. Information service was particularly developed, and correspondents were appointed in and outside the country, to keep the Prophet informed of all that was passing, in Mecca, in Najd, in Ta'if and many other places before their conquest.

267. One created with need, and one developed and reformed with experience. And gradually the central and provincial administration not only worked smoothly but became more and more perfect. Human element was there : money is the principal temptation to the tyrants; and zakat income is the principal and permanent source thereof. How inspiring to note the saying of the Prophet that the zakat income is illicit for him and his family! If the head of the State is honest and scrupulous, how can he subordinates permit themselves to embezzlement? He discouraged ambition and temptations : once a tax collector returned from a province and said : This is the

government income, and this is what people gave me personally as gift. The Prophet called a special meeting of the people in the mosque, and delivered a lecture in which he said : How can people say "this is what they gave me as personal gift"? Let them sit in the house of their mother, and see if gifts come to them? At another occasion he said : If you seek a job, everybody will expect that you do it in a perfect manner, and you become responsible for the least defect, whereas if others insist that you do a work in spite of your persistent refusal, they will all help you in performing your duty and will be indulgent as to the defects in the accomplishment of the task. The Prophet never hesitated even to impose definite bans on individuals, for their competence or incompetence, to do certain works. To his uncle al-'Abbas, he said he should not be employed for tax collection; to Abu Dharr he said : He should never administer property of orphans. And the like. He eulogized people for their capacities and encouraged them. He encouraged by all means spread of education; he renounced even on ransom of the prisoners of war, and demanded of them insteads to teach boys reading and writing. Yet illiteracy did not constitute a bar; Abu Musa al-Ash'ary was sent as judge to Yemen, and he was illiterate : he learn reading and writing first after the death of the Prophet (Ibn sa'd, IV/1, p. 83)--(reason probably for which the caliph 'Umar had asked him not to employ a Christian secretary).

268. It is however not to be forgotten in studying his life, that he began and ended as a messenger of God, so all he did was to carry out the mission that was divinely imposed on him. He stood for a certain ideology, and both religion and State were at the service of this ideology, which could be resumed in the assimilation of the idea that God is the real sovereign, and man must behave as His viceregent, acting according

to His instructions; and since He is beyond human perception, one has to accept as the will of God that which He reveals to the man of His choice, the prophet. Thus the Islamic profession of faith, *La ilaha illal'lah Muhammad rasulul'lah* admirable formulates this ideology. God is the omnipotent sovereign, and His slaves, men, should follow His messenger. There may be messengers of God--such as Jesus Christ--who in explicit terms said that they were not concerned with all walks of life but only with certain of them. But the Prophet of Islam proposed the ideal "Good in this world and good in the Hereafter"; so no aspect of individual or social life could escape his prerogatives.

269. Before studying what he taught, it is important to know how his teaching has been conserved and come down to us.

CONSERVATION OF HIS TEACHING

270. One's teaching bases itself on one's sayings, one's doings, and one's tacitly approving the conduct of one's disciples.

271. Muhammad himself differentiated in different kinds of his sayings. For some he said : it is the message of God, take it down, learn it by heart, recite it in ritual prayers. This is the *Quran*. For others either he said that it was God's revelation, or said nothing, yet in any case he did not demand that that saying should be included in the *Quran*. this is the *Hadith*, The description of his doings and his approval of the doings of others can manifestly come from his companions. This is the *Sunna*. Let us see how these different elements have come down to us.

The Quran

272. Muslims believe that the Quran represents the word of God. God is above even sound and language. We have understood that by a symbol. The word of God is like the electric current, which has no colour and even impossible to see. The prophet is like a bulb, connected to the wire through which the current passes, and is illuminated by the current. The colour of the bulb is the mother tongue of the prophet. The current, that is the word of God, gives light of the same colour as is the colour of the bulb, white, red, yellow, green etc., although the current itself has no colour. The intensity or power of the light depends on the capacity of the bulb. Thus the word of God, which is above sound and language, reaches us through the sound and language of the recipient of the current, the bulb, the prophet.

273. the contents of the Quran extend in a normal printed edition over 500 pages. It is more voluminous than the Pentateuch and the New Testament combined. Historically it was not revealed all in a block, but piecemeal in the course of 23 years, from 609 to 632. In the very beginning when there were no disciples, the revelations ought to have remained in the memory of the Prophet, without being reduced to writing. In the fact these early revelations were neither numerous nor lengthy, and there was no fear of being lost, since the Prophet recited them practically daily during his conversation with those to whom he communicated what had happened to him. Perhaps he recited them also in his Service of Worship, which he celebrated in the beginning twice daily, in the morning and in the afternoon (and many years later he would begin doing that five times every day).

274. Soon when the number of the disciples

augmented, and the revealed passages also increased, it was necessary to communicate to the growing community. Fragments of the biography of the Prophet by Ibn Is'haq have come down to us and in the MS of Rabat there is a very important narration: "Whenever a passage of the Quran; was revealed, the Prophet first recited them in the assembly of men, and then also in an assembly of women". (Female education was as dear to him). Since memorizing capacities differ according to individuals, it was natural that some companions desired to write the text in order to learn it by heart by repeating several times at leisure. When did this begin, we do not know with precision, yet we know--as mentioned above (§ 105)-- that when 'Umar embraced Islam, there were in existence written copies of the chapters of the Quran. 'Umar's conversion is dated from the 5th year of the mission, and second year of the order of public preaching, that is some 8 years before the Hijra. We know also that 'Umar had read then two surats, the 81st and 20th, which are chronologically 7th and 45. There is no reason to doubt the veracity of this report, since several of the early surats, revealed before the Hijra, speak of the written copies of the Quran. So the surat 25 (chronologically 42nd) verse 5, and surat 56 (chronologically 46th) verse 79. The word *kitab* (book) is constantly used for the Quran in the Quran, which naturally implies written document. The very first revelation (96/1) orders: "Read!" That also confirms the necessity of early writing down.

275. The Prophet decided that the revelations of the fragments of the Quran should not be compiled in the mechanically manner of the chronological order. He himself gave them an order, (the very first revelation, which significantly praises the "pen" as the custodian of human knowledge, is now in the 96th of the 114 surats of the Quran!) It was even necessary, since not the whole

surat was always revealed in a block, but parts came down with intervals. According to historians, sometimes several surats were simultaneously in the course of fragmentary revelations. So whenever a new passage was revealed the Prophet indicated where its exact place will be in the whole that was till then revealed. It is he who gave not only the sequence of the verses but also of the surats. This state of affairs required a constant revision and control. So every year, in the month of Ramadan, the Prophet had the habitude of reciting the till-then-revealed Quran publicly, and his companions brought their copies and collated and corrected. During the last Ramadan of his life, he did that twice, as a measure of further precaution. These collations and public recitations were called "arda" (the presentation) and the last presentation ('arda akhira) has remained memorable in the history of the Quran.

276. He took two other measures for the integrity of the Quran. He ordered that the Quran should orally be read in the daily prayers. So people were obliged to learn it by heart and the Holy Text did not become the monopoly of the priestly class. And he ordered that one should study the text with a qualified teacher, in the first instance the Prophet himself, and thereafter those who were authorized by him for having well mastered it. This triple method instituted by the Prophet, viz. writing, studying under a qualified teacher, and learning by heart continues to be followed among Muslims down to this day.

277. Since revelations continued to come till the last moment of the life of the Prophet, no official edition could be published during his life time. When he died, and there was no possibility of new additions nor abrogations, the caliph Abu-Bakr appointed a committee, under the presidentship of the chief secretary of the

Prophet, the Ansarite Zaid ibn Thabit, to prepare a definite copy in the form of a book. Zaid was himself a hafiz, but for further precaution the caliph ordered him that for every verse or word he put down to writing, he should obtain two witnesses, two written documents collated on the Prophet during his "presentations". People were asked to bring their private copies to the mosque, to show to Zaid and his colleagues. When the work completed, read it himself twice again from the beginning to the end, and all deficiencies corrected. The copy remained with the caliph Abu-Bakr, and later with his successor caliph 'Umar, and then with the daughter of this latter, Hafsa, wife of the Prophet. When, after an interregnum, 'Uthman became caliph, he asked the old copy to bring to him, confided it to another commission, presided over by the same Zaid ibn Thabit, to bring the spelling upto date, and make seven copies. These were publicly read in the grand mosque of Madina, to the satisfaction of everybody, and then sent to different provincial extended from Madina in the West as far as Andalusia (southern Spain), with the order that thenceforward copies should conform only to that official copy, and all that differed from it should be destroyed.

278. Of the copies of the time of 'Uthman, we still possess one in Topkapi Museum, Istanbul, and another in Tashkent; and we possess copies of all the succeeding centuries and of different countries of the Muslim world. the Institut fur Koranforschung of the University of Munich, Germany, had collected and collated some 42000 complete or incomplete copies of the Quran, from all over the world, and after some fifty years of work reported that between these various copies there was no real variant, even if there were sometimes mistakes of copists. The Institute was destroyed by American bombs during the Second Great War.

279. This is the story of the transmission of the Quran. A few words as to its contents : There are formulas of the praise of God, orders, prohibitions, promises, menaces, parables and historical narrations. God speaks sometimes in the third person : He. It is intended in the first instant to the Prophet, to the ambassador of God. So there are allusions which His intimate servant, the Prophet understands, and it is he who is charged to communicate to the people. It goes without saying that Kings do not speak like ordinary people and they change even the manner of speaking in the course of the phrase : I say, We sat, the King says, your Lord says, and so on. The style is captivating and grandiose, nobody denies that, not even the enemies of the Prophet. It is in prose, but has all the charms of the poetry, rhythm and rhyme etc. so much so that of even a letter is dropped, the musicality is disturbed and at once detected. Muslims have developed a science, a branch of music to recite the Quran, which is unique of its kind in the world, and is appreciated on all hands down to this day.

280. It may be observed as a passing remark that the Jewish holy book, the Old Testament, even its most important part, namely the Pentateuch or the five books attributed to Moses, is a national history of a race, where words and orders of God are interspersed. The books of other prophets complete the same story of the Jewish nation of succeeding epochs. The Christian Gospels are the biography of the Master, prepared by his disciples and their followers from personal memory or hear-say evidence, and all this long after the departure from the world of the founder of the religion. As to the Quran, it is the founder of the religion who himself has dictated it to his secretaries, and taken effective measures for the conservation and integral transmission; it has come down to us in toto, and in the original language which,

fortunately, has not changed either in grammar, or vocabulary or even spelling during the last fourteen hundred years, with the happy result that those who understand the Arabic newspapers of today understand also the Quran. There are said to be half a million hafizs alone in Turkey, both men and women; 80% of the Muslims of Mauritania are hafiz, and millions all over the world.

Hadith and Sunna

281. The sayings of the Prophet, which he himself did not include in the Quran are called Hadith. If the Prophet had said : "God says that...", we call it Hadith Qudsi, the saintly saying. When there is no precision, it is Hadith. The description of his conduct, of his doings is called Sunna. But often the saying and doing are so intermingled that one finished by considering the two terms as synonymous, and Hadith signifies ordinarily both the sayings and the doings of the Prophet; so too the Sunna signifies doings and sayings of the Prophet. The doings of the Prophet could be his physical work, or even a tacit approval of the conduct of his disciples that came to his knowledge. This confirmation of an existing usage, among his companions, is no less a Sunna. For as the legal maxim says, when speech is necessary, if someone observes silence, his silence is approval.

282. The codification of these non-Quranic sayings and doings of the Prophet has had a very varied story. Partly it was put to writing by order of the Prophet : his letters, treaties, instructions to persons absent, letters-patent and the like were necessarily in writing. There are cases, such as that of Anas, the personal servant of the Prophet, when people wrote down what they knew of the sayings and doings of the Prophet, then showed it to the Prophet and he personally controlled the correctness

of the contents. There are cases, at least half a dozen, when the Companions of the Prophet compiled their memoirs on him during his life-time. More numerous--at least fifty--are the Companions who put down to writing their knowledge on the Prophet after his death. Innumerable are the cases when those who had not seen the Prophet but only his companions, put to these latter questions, codified the precious knowledge found in the answers they received. A classical specialist of Hadith says that, the number of those of the companions of the Prophet who have left to the posterity at least one report exceeds one hundred thousand. There is no exaggeration, since we have seen that during the Last Pilgrimage, the Prophet had addressed an audience of 140,000 Muslims at 'Arafat.

283. In the first generation there could be only memoirs of individual Companions. In the second generation, if a student studied under more than one teacher, more than one Companion of the Prophet, he was in a position to compile a more comprehensive knowledge by the amalgamation of the narrations coming from different sources. In a succeeding generation, the knowledge of practically all the important sources could be pooled. And that was what happened.

284. Since there was no control of the Hadith as there was on the text of the Quran, there was possibility of misapprehensions, mistakes and even of something worse. So the science of appreciating the value of the individual reports of the Hadith came into existence, and its germs were discernible already in the time of the Companions of the Prophet. Biographical dictionaries were specially prepared for the transmitters of the Hadith, noting in particular the reputation of each as honest or weak author, names of his teachers and names

of his pupils, and the like. In the second generation, it did not suffice to say "the Prophet has said"--much less in the third and later generations--but one was obliged for each single report, of even a single line, to say: "I have heard from my teacher such and such companion of the Prophet." In the third generation one had to say: "I have heard from my teacher such and such, who from such and such companion of the Prophet saying that the Prophet said so and so". The chain of this exhaustive citation of the successive sources lengthened naturally from generation to generation.

285. There was another way of control: If the same report was transmitted by different Companions of the Prophet, all saying the same thing, it had naturally greater chance of being correct than the report of a single Companion.

286. Contents of Hadith could be compiled according to narrators, or according to subject matter, among other methods. But everywhere it was necessary to give exhaustive sources for each individual Hadith quoted in the book.

287. There could be conflicts also in the reports of different sources. It may be due to some fault on the part of the transmitter of some generation, or due to the fact that the Prophet himself had modified his attitude and abrogated a former order. These and many other matters are dealt with in the books of Hadithology (*ilm al-Hadith*). Suffices here to say that this kind of religious knowledge, knowledge on the sayings and doings and tacit approvals of the Prophet, is unique in world history.

Sira

288. A third kind of books on the Prophet consist of his biographies, by later authors. The earliest have emanated from the sons of the companions of the Prophet, like 'Urwa ibn az-Zubair. Only extracts of their books have come down to us as cited in works of later generations. The earliest extant biography of the Prophet whose fragments we possess is by a tabi'i, i.e. one who had studied under the companions of the Prophet and also their followers. We mean Ibn Ishaq, who died in 768 (151 H.). Such works are called Sira. They resemble to the Gospels concerning the life of Jesus. Since these biographers also followed the method of citing their sources exhaustively, it is possible to control their value, and even the value of each fact recorded by them.

Documents of the Time of the Prophet

289. These are of two kinds. First there are inscriptions, particularly in Madina, also in Mecca, Ta'if etc. These are sometimes dated, such as a water dam near Ta'if, where the name of a governor of caliph Mu'awiya, a companion himself, is given along with the year. Others specially of earlier date are undated. Some of these could be attributed to the time of the Prophet. (I have published photos and studied some such inscriptions of Madina, which appear to me as being from the year 5 of the Hijra, of the time of the battle of Khandaq).

290. The second category concerns letters. Five originals of the letters attributed to the Prophet have survived to this day. One of them, addressed to Muqauqis, is in Topkapi Museum. (I have also studied their authenticity separately). In the papyri of Egypt,

one has discovered several letters of the caliph 'Umar's time, dating from the year 22 etc. As they are dated, there is less possibility of their being forgeries.

291. Certain objects belonging personally to the Prophet have also come down to us. His haris are found in many countries. In Istanbul,--as also in India and elsewhere-- there are mantles or other garments of the Prophet. Of course there can be no guarantee of their being authentic. For instance, history says that the sword of the Prophet, the famous Dhu'l-faqar was broken during the early centuries of Islam, yet it is still exhibited in good form in the Topkapi museum. These objects, if authentic, may make some contribution to the history of industry, but to history proper there is no much in them.

The reason ('aql) and the Supernatural

292. The person of every pious man in human history, be that a prophet and founder of religion or a simple saint (wali), is normally inseparably connected with the supernatural. Abraham, Moses, Jesus, Zoroaster, Buddha or else. No wonder that the Prophet of Islam will make no exception. Great miracles are recorded: he resuscitated a dead, he pointed out with his finger and the moon split in two for a while and then rejoined, small quantity of food sufficed to a great number of people, he was transported to the presence of God on high and then returned on earth, and every many other miracles. Believers are justly proud of them.

293. Some remarks are however called for. According to the Quran, it is not the prophet who does miracles, but God, the prophet always saying: I myself can do nothing. For God, creator of the universe, nothing is miracle, He says: "Be!" and it is. For Him,

there is no question of cause and effect, no need even of precedents. In his independent will, He can do what He will, and when He will. Some of His prophets have done prodigious things, and others have even been assassinated by their compatriots, and God did not want even to save their life.

294. It is also to be noted that the real utility of miracles is very relative, and Muslims have always been unanimous to believe that miracles are not necessary for a prophet. Miracles have also never been convincing proofs to everybody.* Temperaments differ so much. A man like Abu-Bakr will embrace Islam without seeing least miracle. Others like Abu-Jahl would not even on seeing miracles. To a few, the extraordinary happening will overwhelm, and they will accept the affirmation of the person from whom the miracle emanates.

* A miracle in the sense of an abnormal event cannot be the proof of the truth of an assertion, of a doctrine. Take an example: We know that two and two make four. Suppose that someone says: "Two and two make five because I can walk bare-footed on fire, or : on water". There is no relation between the two things, each of which must be treated separately. That two and two make four and no five, could be demonstrated by means of arithmetical rules. To be able to walk unburnt on fire, or unplunged on water, if that really happens sometimes to someone, must have causes and reasons in the laws of nature, since ours is a world of causes and effects; and the Holy Quran repeatedly assures (17/77, 33/62, 35/43, 48/23) that God does not change His laws (even though He is capable to do that if He likes). If the reason of some abnormal event remains unknown to someone, he calls it a miracle be that from a prophet, a saint or even a diabolically mischievous man. Unthinking minds alone would take it as a proof for the thesis that two and two make five. To prove that two and two make four, one requires no miracle at all, but only a little bit of arithmetic. So is the claim to prophethood, so is the doctrine that God is unique, that there will be resurrection after death for giving accounts, and so on and so forth: they require no miraculous proof for a man of common sense and normal intelligence. The so-called "miracles" of prophets are a historical fact but, to my humble mind, they do not constitute a logical proof of the truth of the teachings of the prophets, which are true independently of these miracles. It is significant, that the Quran does not use the word *mu'jiza* (miracle) in this connection, but *ayat* (sign, a great event).

295. Further, a natural phenomenon may pass unnoticed, except curiosity and admiration, but the same phenomenon obtains great practical value when somebody has need of it. Supposing there is an explosion in moon for internal combustion, it rents into two and the attraction of the gravity makes again the parts to rejoin, we will say it is a phenomenon of the nature; the same things if it happens precisely at the moment when the enemies of a prophet say: "If there is only one God, All-Powerful, then ask Him to split the moon", and the same event occurs, we shall name it a miracle. The miracle is not the phenomenon, but its coinciding with this demand of the unbelievers. Otherwise there is no connection between God's being One and the splitting of the moon. It could also happen if there were many gods, and the god of the moon wanted to "punish the moon for instance.

296. Another point never to neglect is that extraordinary works are not limited to prophets. If they happen at the hand of the prophet, we call it *mu'jiza* (something from which others are put into the incapacity of doing likewise); even miscreants are not deprived of them, and if they happen at their hand they are called *istidraj* (that is a camouflage to deceive others). How to distinguish between a truthful prophet and a false pretender?

297. It is for these reasons, I suppose, that the Quran never insists on the miracles of the Prophet of Islam, but repeatedly invites men to think, to ponder, to meditate, to reason, to argument, to deduce. To Islam, a belief must be based on inner conviction, and not on mere passion. It is also possible that this has been so because the Quran is for a developed humanity, and not for the primitive men, whose science was relatively rudimentary and who had not discovered the great laws

of the nature, and it was only in their dreams that they could go on the moon.

298. So the miracles of the Prophet of Islam are an incident, on the margin of his life history; the essential in it is his teaching.

CHAPTER 11

A CONCISE EXPOSE OF HIS TEACHINGS

299. According to Brahmanist Indian theologians "prevalent custom is the best of law". So any change of the religious commandment accepted by the masses, be that change limited to a region only, is not regarded as a violation of law. Among Jews also it is the opinion of the rabbis that is applied, not the letter of the revealed Biblical law. Christians go even farther, and they believe that the assembly of priests takes place under the aegis of the Holy Ghost. Formerly recalcitrants were excluded from councils, now-a-days a simply majority is sufficient, even a consensus is not considered necessary for change of any and every old dogma or practice.

300. Islam alone attaches importance to the purity of the religion, and unlike other religions, Islam can boast that its actual religious law, both in dogmas and in cult, is exactly the same as in the time of the Prophet. Individuals may be negligent, yet they do not pretend that their conduct constitutes Islam. Insufficiently Islamicized groups also exists, who have not yet abandoned some of their pre-Islamic customs, particularly in heritage; they also voluntarily admit that their practice is not Islamic.

301. We have seen above that the basic documents of the Islamic teaching have come down to us in a trustworthy manner, in the original language and--as far as the Quran is concerned -- also in toto. So it is easy to know what really the Prophet of Islam taught. One may accept this teaching or reject, but one is constrained to admit that this is the teaching of Muhammad.

302. There is a difference between a national or regional and a universal one. Also between a temporary and a lasting religion. The Quran and the Hadith are explicit that Muhammad is the last of the messengers of God, no prophet any more after him.

303. Dogmas to believe in, and rules of law to abide by are our duties, one for the spirit and the other for the body. The Quran and the Hadith have contended themselves with the minimum necessary, leaving the rest to individual discretion or capacity. One must believe in God, but the notion of God cannot be the same. Fortunately God task us not except according to our individual capacities, as the Quran (2/286) has announced.

304. One day the Prophet of Islam had himself resumed his teaching, and the Hadith has come down to us in all the best collections, like Bukhari, Muslim and others, and every word of it is based on some part of the Quran, particularly 2/285 and 4/136. The Hadith runs :

One day a stranger asked the Prophet : What is the *iman* (Faith)? He replied : To believe in God, in His angels, in His Books, in His prophets, in the Hereafter, and in the fact that all determination of good or evil is on the part of God!

Then he asked : What is *Islam* (true submission)? He replied : To establish Service of Worship, to fast the month of Ramadan, to go to hajj if one finds way thereto, and to pay the zakat-tax.

He further asked : What is *Ihsan* (embellishment of all this)? And he to reply :

That you worship (and obey) God as if you see Him present; and although you do not see Him, yet He sees you.

When the stranger departed, the Prophet said: Look who is he? But he had already disappeared. Thereupon the Prophet said : It was Gabriel who had come to teach you your religion.

One may visualize all this as an edifice, whose roof is constituted by what one believes, the four pillars that support the roof are the four practical duties of prayer, fasting, zakat and hajj, and the decoration is the sincerity and conscientious observance both of dogmas and cult.

305 It is a nice and logically coherent resume of the teaching of Muhammad : One must believe in God our creator and obey him; since He is transcendent, His orders will reach us through an angel, by the intermediary of a Prophet; there is a sanction also, the Doms day; it is insisted that nothing is good or evil in itself, it is God who attributes these qualities to different things.

306. What is particularly striking and inspiring in the simple creed is its universality and continuity even as the note of tolerance that permeates it : It is not that God of this or that "house", (tribe) but God of all. One has to believe in the Books, and not merely the Book, which would limit itself to the Quran; and one has to believe in the messengers, and not merely the messenger, confining itself to Muhammad. And it would have been perfectly acceptable to reason, if it had concerned only the Quran and Muhammad. But no; there is a large-heartedness which is unprecedented in the world history of religions. From Adam to

Muhammad, all prophets of God, of all epochs and of all countries and all races, even as all Books revealed by God to all these prophets in different languages, -- all are Islam's prophets, and all the Islam's Books. The Quran ceaselessly repeats that God has sent His messengers to all nations without exception, in all epochs, the names of some of whom are mentioned in the Quran, with the express precision that many more have been there.

307. It goes without saying that, when the same Legislator promulgates successive laws on the same subject, it is the latest that remains in vigour; and one will not be considered as a loyal and law-abiding subject who remains attached to a former disposition of the law which, although emanating from the legislator, is yet replaced by himself by another, later enactment. So Muslims believe in and honour all the prophets, and apply the latest Book revealed by God.

308. For general information and comparison, it will perhaps not be out of place to quote the official text of the Christian creed here :

I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ His only son our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried, he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead, he ascended into heaven, and sits on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick (= those who are living) and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic (universal) church; the communion of Saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body;

and the life everlasting. Amen.

309. Another instructive comparison is furnished in the two major religions of our epoch by the basic supplication (du'a) :

The Prophet said : No service of worship without the surat al-fatiha of the Quran, as under :

With the name of God the Most Merciful, the All-Merciful.

Praise be to God, Lord of the worlds, the Most Merciful, the All-Merciful, Owner of the day of retribution.

Thee alone we worship, and Thee alone we ask for help.

Show us the right path : the path of those whom Thou hast favoured, not of those who have earned wrath, nor of those who have gone astray. Amen.

(quran 1/1-7)

In his sermon on the mountain Jesus said : But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as they heathens do...for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask Him. After this manner, therefore pray ye;

Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our offenses, as we forgive those who offend us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from Evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen

(St. Matthew 6/7-13)

310. Reverting to the Islamic creed, the "Determination of good and evil" requires some meditation. Does this formula really refer to the predestination? It is not sure. To determine what is good and what is evil, is God's affair. That is what it

literally means. Nobody may object to it. The same thing becomes good to one and evil to another. The wolf devours a rabbit; it is subsistence (therefore good) for one, and death (therefore evil) to another. The result of a decisive battle is good for the victory, and evil for the vanquished. Even the murder is not always bad: the gun shot by a little child, by a mad man, by a hunter really aiming on a beast, by the official executioner, by a robber, by a soldier on an enemy in war--what a tremendous difference in the taking of the life of a man by these different persons! To whom one act is good and to whom the same act is evil? In simple cases, common sense and good conscience may be sufficient guide, yet in the more complicated cases, one must leave it to God. Is that the sense of the formula "Determination of good and evil belongs to God"? I dare not affirm. Let every reader determine for himself.

311. But I solicit his permission to say a few words on the Free-will and Predestination. Everybody asks: "If God has predestined everything, why am I punished?" But nobody seems to ask: "If God has predestined everything, why am I rewarded for my good deeds?" We must be doing mechanically in both cases. The Prophet of Islam has emphatically discouraged this discussion, and this for reason. In fact there is an unsoluble dilemma. If we say that man is responsible for his acts, that leads to the blasphemous belief that God's power is limited. Not a leaf of a tree must fall without the will of God; how can we act the acts we do without God's will and permission? On the other hand, if we say that God is omnipotent, to the extent of predestining all our acts, then human logic revolts and say: Then why am I responsible for my acts? Either God must be All-Powerful, or man must not be responsible: both cannot go together. That is the dilemma.

312. As said, to avoid such possible confusion of brains, the Holy Prophet has emphatically discouraged indulging in this particular discussion. Let us take into consideration on basic point: God's omnipotence is a celestial matter, man's responsibility of his acts is an earthy, human notion. They are not on the same plane, and there is as little possibility of clash as between the earth and the sun: although both are floating in the space, yet not in the same orbit. Nobody must take objection to the belief that our Creator is All-Powerful, even to the extent of being able to predestine and predetermine our acts. Our responsibility, in spite of that, comes from our own acts. Our responsibility, in spite of that, comes from our own voluntary acceptance of it on the Day of Past-Eternity (yaum al-azal), when God had made His offer, everybody refused to accept it, it was man who accepted it. Says the Quran:

"Lo! We offered the Deposit unto the heavens and the earth and the hills, but they shrank from bearing it and were afraid of it; and Man assumed it. Verily he was very much lacking, very much ignorant."

(33/72)

What can be this trust and deposit if not to agree that God Almighty should predestine for us whatever He likes and wills yet we must never grudge but accept gladly whatever our Lord wants to give to each of us! Can an obedient and loyal slave even care to regard what the Master gives to another of His slaves, much less complaining: why to him, why not to me? If an artist designs a picture, and then modifies it partly or effaces it entirely to design something new; can these designs and details of the designs have the least right to

complain? Are we any better, with regard to God, than the designs to an artist?

313. The second part of the Hadith of Gabriel concerned the cult. In the course of the biography of the Prophet, we have had occasion to speak of them at considerable length. We need not repeat the discussion. Let us not miss the opportunity of dispelling a widespread misapprehension. The *ihsan* of which the Prophet explained that it is the embellishment and decoration of the whole edifice of Islam, be that of dogmas or of cult. This is the same thing as is called sometimes *tasauwuf*, *suluk*, *tariqa* also. Science is science, if there is bad knowledge on the part of one pretending knowing it, or even bad use of that knowledge, how can it be the fault of the science? The Holy Prophet has put it in a nutshell : Develop the notion of the presence of God. God is omnipresent, yet if one realizes it, it is impossible that he should be a disgrace to the "holder of the Trust of God". To develop the notion of the presence of God, there are some principles and some methods. Apart from concentrating on the remembrance of God, a fundamental requirement is the constant observance of what the mystics call the "talking of the truth and eating of the lawfull" (*sidq al-maqal*, *al-halal*). As to methods, they differ according to individuals. The *ihsan* is no monopoly of the *tekke*, * it can be found on the throne of the god-fearing king also. Which *tekke*-living mystic can be more exalted than 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz (who ruled from Andalus to (china), not to speak of the early well-guided caliphs from among the Companions of the Prophet? A meaningful and amusing story says: One

* Take or *khanqah* to Muslim dervishes is like monastery to Christians.

days a *tekke*-living * dervish asked his spiritual guide : Is there anybody better than you to whom I may visit ? He said, yes, and gave a letter of recommendation. When the dervish found that the addressee was a king, his deception had no bounds, but had to transmit the letter. The king understood the perplexity of the dervish, and forthwith ordered to bring a cup with milk full to the brink, and handing it to the dervish he said : "Go, take a round of the town, but pay heed and do not let fall a single drop of it". A soldier was directed to accompany him, with the clear order : "If a single drop of the milk falls from the cup, immediately smite the neck of the dervish". After a while when the dervish returned to the presence of the king, the latter asked : "Did you enjoy our beautiful capital, and all the ceremonies and festivities that are going on there today?" The dervish said : "I saw absolutely nothing, all my attention was on the cup of milk". The king laughed and said : "So too is the kingdom to me, not a second do I enjoy it for fear of God!"

Muslim Law

314. The Creed (*Iman*) the cult (*ibadat*) and the mysticism (*ihsan*) are the basis of Islamic teaching, no doubts about it, yet they cannot exhaust the details of the worldly life. These latter are governed by the Muslim law, the *fiqh*. It gives details of not only the cult, but also of transactions, penalties, constitutional law, international law, personal status, heritage, and so on. The philosophy of Muslim law is worth noting, and it is this philosophy which has given it the possibility of developing. The Quran divides legal acts in *ma'ruf* (good) and *munkar* (evil). What is good, one must do it, it is obligatory (*fard* and *wajib* of the jurists). What is evil, one must shun it, it is illicit and forbidden (*haram*). And in matters of a mixed nature, if the good

prevails, the act will be recommended (*mustahabb*), without being obligatory; and if the evil prevails and preponderates, one will be discouraged from it (*makruh*), without forbidding the act absolutely. All the rest will be left to the discretion of the individual, and either way will be permissible (*mubah*). Like the directions on the compass dial, there will also be intermediary grades (not only North and East, but also North-East, North-North-East etc.; similarly *makruh* for instance will have sub-divisions of *makruh-tanzihi* and *makruhtahrimi*, and the like, the details of which will lead us very far away from our subject).

315. It is now to note that the number of obligatory and forbidden acts is very limited in the Quran and the Hadith; that of recommended and discouraged from, is a bit more, yet still not enormous. Conscience is regarded as the best guide to consult ("consult your conscience, even if the jurisconsults authorize you", has said the Prophet). In another celebrated Hadith, we find the nucleus of development of the Muslim law. One day when the governor-designate Mu'adh ibn Jabal came to take leave of the Prophet before going to take charge of his function, the following conversation took place: How would you decide. Mu'adh, when something is brought before you? According to the Book of God (the Quran)! And if you do not find a precision therein? Then according to the Sunna of the messenger of God! But if you find no precision therein either? Then I shall make effort with my own opinion! Praise be to God who has guided the messenger of His messenger to what is agreeable to the messenger of God, exclaimed the Prophet. Thus there will be basic stability and also possibility of adaptability:

316. Individual opinion may be replaced by a better opinion of another individual; a unanimous opinion will

naturally carry a greater weight, yet even the unanimity of the fallible cannot be infallible and eternal. So jurist accept that one consensus (*ijma'*) may be replaced by a later consensus. The basic principle is that a rule can be abrogated by the authority that had promulgated that rule, or by an authority superior to him. Thus the word of God (Quran) can be changed by another revelation of God only; nobody can abrogate it. The word of the Prophet can be modified by him or by God. Opinions of a learned can modify neither the Quran nor the by each other, since there is equality between the believers. This fundamental equality is no denying the fact that there be grades between the learned in the eyes of the masses, since all are not alike gifted by the nature.

317. Deduction by similarity, on account of the greater public utility, and so on, are the various methods which have not only developed Muslim law in times after the Prophet, but also preserved its elasticity: law is for man, man is not for law.

Some criticisms

318. We are separated from the time of the Prophet by fourteen hundred years. Conditions of life have enormously changed. Are the old rules still capable of guiding the new humanity? A recent work of an American missionary (*Towards Understanding Islam*, by H. G. Dorman) may be taken as an impartial opinion. He says, in all the Muslim morality there is nothing to reproach except divorce and polygamy. (For the sake of this section, I shall add thereto the notion of jihad, and the penalty of theft). Since nothing else appears to a non-Muslim as shocking, let us concentrate on these rules alone and meditate: If there is obligatory monogamy and no possibility of divorce, home may sometimes become a hell. And as a matter of fact and in

spite of the prohibition on divorce by Jesus Christ in the Gospels. Today divorce is allowed all over the Christian world, through the legislations of parliaments. Islam has known its social necessity from the very beginning, and Christianity required two thousand years to understand it. It is to note that in Islam, divorce is "the most detestable of the permitted things in the sight of God", as a Hadith says. And in spite of the facility of divorce, the number of cases is not great. One of the reasons is perhaps, that Muslim law has imposed the *mahr* (salary of honour) which every husband must contract with his wife at the time of marriage, and which is a *sine qua non* of the marriage. It belongs to the wife, and a divorce naturally precipitates the payment.

319. Rests polygamy. No religion, not even Christianity has forbidden polygamy. According to the Bible, Solomon had one thousand wives (700 wives and 300 concubines), and David had one hundred wives. Abraham, Moses and all the great and venerated names of human history are polygamous. Islam is in fact the only religion which has (I°) placed a limit to the maximum number permissible, viz. four; and (II°) provided the possibility of "abolishing" it. For marriage in Islam is a contract like any other contract, and depends on the agreement of the parties, who may stipulate all lawful conditions : not only for the armoured of the *mahr*, but for any other aspect of the married life. Among the lawful conditions, is the monogamy : a woman may demand of her fiancé to remain monogamous for the duration of his marriage with her. If he accepts, he must abide by it; if not, there is no marriage if she insists on the condition. The case of the 'Abbasid caliph al-Mansur is celebrated in this connection, and no jurist of his time could give him a *fatwa* declaring viciousness and illegality of the condition of monogamy he had contracted with his wife.

320. The notion of *jihad* in Islam has been victim of misrepresentation by its enemies. The Quran formally says : "There is no compulsion in matter of religion". Nobody can be compelled to embrace Islam, much less could a war be declared against a non-Muslim country just for the sake of obliging it to embrace Islam. The Quran is clear (2/190-1) :

"And combat in the way of God against those who combat you, but do not transgress, verily God does not like the transgressors. And slay them wherever ye find them, and drive them out of the places whence they drove you..."

There are two prerequisites : it should be for the sake of God, and not worldly ambitions, and that it should be against those who attack. The defence alone is the lawful ground of waging a war for Muslims. To prevent an imminent attack, forms part of the defensive wars. No other kind of war is known in the life of the Prophet. We have seen above, how humane and bloodless have been the "wars" of the Prophet of Islam : not even 300 enemies are killed to conquer three million square kilometers of territory! The Rightly-guided caliphs also have given the same example of conduct, to become masters of three continents.

321. Of the penal laws of Islam, I do not require to speak in detail of the evils of alcoholic drinks; from the very beginning, when whipping is administered, it is easily eradicated. Capital punishment for deliberate murder is provided, but is not obligatory : accused has the possibility of capitalizing his crime, and escape by paying blood money if the heirs of the victim agree to it. Lapidation of the adulterer is to take place only when four eye-witnesses testify to the gravity of the shamelessness. When such a rigorous evidence is not

available, the court cannot apply the penal law. (Old Testament also has the same penalty). Rests the theft, for which amputation of hand is provided. I remember, when the Turks left Hijaz after the First Great War, under Sharif Husain no pilgrim was sure to return home safe. Some people who had seen both the Turkish and the Sharifian regimes, as inhabitants of the country, had told me that Sharif Husain did not hesitate to receive part of the "booty" of the brigands. When Ibn Sa'ud expelled the corrupt regime, he restored the Muslim penal law. After the first few applications of the penalty, months passed without a single theft being committed in the whole territory, as I had read in journals of Mecca, in 1932. In 1939 I was witness of another curious case: I was travelling in a caravan of camels, from Mecca to Madina. In a certain station, a lady in our caravan complained of having lost her suit case. the police noted the case and promised to investigate; three weeks later when we passed by the same place during our return journey, the police asked what was the value of the contents; and then said: we have been unable to find out the thief, this is the amount you claim, which the government pays you for the loss of your suit case! Opinions may differ whether a severe law with rare need of application is better or a lenient law which is incapable of uprooting the evil. One must not forget the fact that in Islam the sanction is double; even if one escapes the governmental punishment for lack of evidence, the Divine punishment in the Hereafter is very effective in normal cases. Let governments educate people in this second sanction also which is very much more deterrent than the police and law courts.

CHAPTER 12

THE MAN IN HIS FAMILY

322. We have tried to portray Muhammad as the messenger of God, in his public life, and how he instituted a religion in order to realize his Divine mission and to communicate the message he had received to communicate; and also how he had created a State, not as a goal, but simply as an instrument to help him in the realization of his task and the survival of the organization he had created. Let us see him now in his private life, how he used to pray and fast, to treat his family and children, to behave vis-a-vis his visitors, servants and slaves, and do the work at home.

Man with his God

323. As the head of the community, it was his prerogative and privilege to lead the Service of Worship in public and pray in congregation. But if he asked others to pray five times a day, he himself added many more habitual (sunna) and supererogatory (nafila) prayers, and these usually inside the house. There were many imperative needs for this practice: Whatever the Prophet did, became law to Muslims; and he did not want to impose others beyond the minimum necessary. If the supererogatory prayers were celebrated in the mosque, people would think that that was also part of everybody's duty. Religion would become difficult, and material life would suffer. Further, praying the supererogatory services in the house avoided ostentation, and remained only between man and God what is God's. As the Quran says, the night vigil (tahajjud) was a personal duty of

the Prophet "to the exclusion of the other Muslims". After the night congregational prayer, he nodded a bit, and rose again to pray tahajjud. Sometimes he performed such long prayers that his legs swelled. He was far from the man of lust and luxury which heads of State generally are, but an ascetic, full of self-moritification. He did render all its rights to the family, but he was a man of God more than anybody else.

324. He had ordered his disciples to fast the whole month of Ramadan, every year. As to himself, he fasted, in addition to this many times as much. Every Monday and Thursday, and every 13th, 14th and 15th of the lunar month he fasted habitually. (Fast is no more understood among non-Muslims. Not only lay men, but even priests, monks, and hermits among Christians are now told by their popes that fasting is of thoughts and not privation from food and drink. On my question recently, a Catholic priest of Hamburg told me, the Christian fast means to have a light breakfast, a full lunch, and a light dinner. Muslim fasting means to abstain from eating, drinking, smoking and many other things from dawn to sunset, be that in the hot summer or cold winter. detractors would insinuate that it is harmful to health. Trees fast in winter, they are not watered, their leaves fall; when spring approaches, they are rejuvenated with luxuriant foliage and flowers and fruits. Savage birds and beasts also fast in hibernation, and neither eat nor drink, and when spring approaches, they bring out fresh feathers or skin, have renovated vigour for reproduction and so on. The health of those who do not fast is normally poorer. Napoleon used to say in envy: "If I had Turks for my army, I would conquer the world in no time, for they support privation of food and drink and still fight normally".) The Prophet fasted other untold days of the year, but not the same always.

325. He asked others to pay zakat on savings and on hoarded money. He himself was so generous that he spent all he had. When he died, he left in his house not a dinar, not a dirham.

Slaves and Servants

326. Islam has recognized slavery as the Bible has; but if the Bible has not a word to say to liberate them, it is practically abolished in Islam, as we shall presently describe. At a time when slavery existed all over the world, and Muslim subjects taken prisoners by the enemy could be enslaved, it was not practical to abolish slavery in a unilateral manner. The Prophet decreed: Whichever enemy slave takes refuge in Muslim camp or Muslim territory, will automatically become freed. And whichever slave girl gave birth to a child from her master, will automatically become freed at the death of her master, if this does not liberate her earlier. The Quran says (90/11) that liberating a slave is the best of charity; it is an expiation for various sins such as accidental homicide (4/92), an oath which one is constrained not to observe (5/89), to revoke a divorce in which one had compared his wife to his own mother (58/3). Further, it is incumbent upon the Muslim government (9/60) to earmark every year a reasonable amount in its budget to aid slaves in the country to purchase their liberation. It is also possible for a slave (24/33) to pay his value to the master and get liberated; and in order to procure necessary money, to work (and no more serve his master during this work). According to the Quran (47/4) prisoners of war--the greatest source of obtaining new slaves--are to be liberated gratuitously

or on ransom; they are not to be put to slavery (*) Imam Sarakhsi (**) quotes a Hadith : "No slavery on Arabs". A slave may become Muslim, but a free Muslim cannot be enslaved, even when he is captured as rebel in a war (unlike the law of the Bible : a Jew can enslave a Jew).

327. The utility of the slavery has been that it procured a roof to displaced and destitute person, captured in a war. He gets a healthy environment, learns culture, and becomes a human being, and then he can become a better member of the society. It is to note that a freed slave and a free-born are equal in Islam. Freed slaves have become rulers, and given

* This is the outward sense of this passage-and Ibn Rushd, *Bidayat al-Mujtahid*, I, 351, ed. Mustafa al-Babi, Cairo, quotes even a consensus of the Companions of the Prophet on not enslaving the prisoners of war—although an earlier verse, 33/50, had allowed slave girls obtained as war booty. to reconcile the two verses, one has to admit that the direction in 47/4 is alternative and not exclusive much less abrogative, more so since the Prophet himself has had recourse to enslavement not only in case of Banu'l-Mustaliq in the year 5 H. (of Ibn Hisham, 729), and of the Hawazin in 8 H. (of Ibn Hisham, p. 877-8), but even in that of Banu'-Anbar as late as 9 H. (of Ibn Hisham, p. 983), although causing all these enslaved persons to be liberated later on by their Muslim owners.

** *Mabsut*, X, 40 and 118; the same, *Sharh as-Siyar al-Kabir*, II, 265 and 269, (ed. Hyderabad). In the last reference, the context is given as the battle of Hunain with the Hawazin tribe, of the year 8 H., where the Prophet had effectively decreed to enslave women and children captured in the enemy camp, and distributed them as booty. Later, when a delegation of the fugitive men came to declare repentance and conversion to Islam, the enslaved persons were liberated by their owners at the recommendation of the Prophet, which act could not fail to consolidate the Islam of the new converts.

birth to dynasties in Islam : Mamluk in Egypt, Ghulamans and others in India.

328. Such being the Muslim law, no wonder that the Prophet liberated all his slaves as soon as he obtained them, in booty or as a gift. As just mentioned if a slave girl gives birth to a child from her master, who has no right even to sell her : she has all the rights of a married wife with the exception of inheritance from the husband- master. In order to fortify the precept by practice, when the Prophet received as a present from Muqauqis of Egypt a slave girl, Maria, he did not liberate her but kept her for himself; and she gave birth to Ibrahim, son of the Prophet, who however died in his second year of age. According to the imam az-Zuhri, the Prophet not only decreed the potential liberty of Maria, but went so far as to say : "Had Ibrahim lived, I would have exempted all Coptic Christians from the *jizya* (capitation)"

His Wives

329. The Quran (33\6 and 53) has laid down that the wives of the Prophet are Mothers of the Faithful; no Muslim may marry them after the Prophet, since they are his mothers. What an honour for a Muslim woman to be the wife of her Prophet and to be the mother of all the Muslims! No wonder, women were eager that the Prophet should take them in marriage. I have asked many a modern but religiously disposed Christian girl in Europe : If Jesus were to come back today on the earth and want to marry you in polygamy, would you refuse? None said : No.

330. Many a time the Prophet has said : I have no need of a wife. In fact it was sacrifice on his part to burden himself with the duties of a married life; but he

had to offer a model to his community, to give a practical example of an ideal polygamous life. To live a good monogamous life is easy; if polygamy was tolerated even in exceptional cases, he wanted to give a practical example how to treat the numerous wives; and also to teach them how to behave between themselves.

331. In antiquity, no prophet had prohibited polygamy, not even laid a limit on the maximum number of wives. The practice of the pre-Islamic Arab was also the same. As is known, the Quran was revealed only gradually, and the verse to limit the maximum number of wives was revealed at a moment when the Prophet had already contracted his last marriage. Laws are normally not retroactive. But in case of polygamy the Prophet asked all those Muslims who had more than four wives to divorce the exceeding number. As we shall presently see, he had then nine wives; why he did not practice the same law himself? Many people ask that. The reply is : He did practice that, in the following manner :

332 First of all he assembled all his wives and told them what was the new Muslim law on marriage, and then said : I have nothing to reproach to any of you; so it is upto you to decide for yourselves and choose who wants to remain as my wife, and who accepts to get divorced. Which Muslim woman would like to throw away the great honour which is to be the wife of her Prophet? Naturally none wanted to be divorced, with maintenance for life. Basing himself on the Divine revelation, he then told them : I am prepared to keep you all as my wives, on condition that I have conjugal relations with four only. All agreed. The Prophet interpreted the letter of the revelation, as the Quran (33\51) : reports, in a manner that " they are comforted and not grieved". In fact he changed the four real wives

from time to time, and replaced them by others. But this interpretation did not please God, and He revealed (33\52) : "It is not allowed thee to take (new) wives henceforth, nor that thou shouldn't change them for other wives even though their beauty please thee, save those whom thy right hand possesseth, and God is watcher over all things". we see that the Prophet did not feel himself above the law, even in matters of marriage.

333. There are many things which a woman feels shy to ask a man about; she can easily put that question to a woman. Thus the need of a learned woman is great in a Muslim society, and who could be more learned than the wives of a prophet, living with him and learning from him? If the Prophet had only one wife, nobody could guarantee that she would live long. The greater the number of the wives of a man, the greater the chance that some of them would survive for considerable time. Judging from the Hadiths of the Prophet they have reported, and fatwas they have given they all seem to have been very intelligent, full of common sense. Moreover all of them have left a model of the life of piety and charity.

334. Another need of the Prophet was the consolidation of Islam, and to make friends with important personalities. By marrying the daughter of an influential chief, one profits by his influence, and this, in the case of the Prophet, not for the cause of Islam, for the sake of God.

335. There are other advantages to some of which we shall try to allude in the course of the biographical sketches of his wives, as under :

1. Khadija

336. His first wife was Khadija, whom he had married long before Islam. She was a Meccan, of the aristocratic tribe of the Asad. She was a widow, who had lost one after the other two husbands. She was extremely intelligent, and instead of wasting what she had inherited, she fructified her property and indulged in commerce. As a young woman, she could not herself travel, so she entrusted her merchandised to honest merchants of the town who wanted to go to foreign countries for bartering goods. The gains and profits were shared by the capitalist and by the agent half and half, report the historians. It was for similar reasons that Muhammad met Khadija for the first time, and his honesty procured for him the esteem of the employer, and the esteem gradually developed into affection and love. This ended, as we have already seen, in their marriage, when he was 25 and she, according to better reports, 28 (although more popularly she was 40 years of age then). In the following years she gave birth to half a dozen children, of whom only the four daughters survived. Later when these married in Islam, the Prophet seems to have insisted that their husbands remain monogamous. (This may show his personal preference for normal cases of life). Khadija was generous and charitable to everybody : to the old foster-mother of the Prophet who came often to Mecca to see her beloved and kind nursling, to orphans, widows and other poor in the town, to foreign destitutes in transit in Mecca, and to all deserving cases. She had a fine two-storied house, since the historians say : When the Prophet returned from Palestine, Khadija saw his caravan coming from the upper storey of her house. The place where this house was situated is still known in Mecca. She forsook her husband neither in weal nor in woe, and she was the first to believe in him and embrace

Islam; much more, she comforted him and encouraged him when in the very beginning the Prophet had hesitation to believe that he was really chosen by God to be a prophet. An interesting story is recorded by historians. In the early days of the mission, one day she told to her husband : Can you tell me when the angel comes to visit you? He said, yes. One day he said : There he is. She placed her husband on her right, and asked : Is he still visible? And the reply was always in the positive. Then she pressed her husband in her arms; and immediately the Prophet said : No, he has vanished. Thereupon Khadija said : He must certainly be an angel, for a devil would not have left looking on us in our intimacy. After the terrible boycott, which the tribe of the Prophet had suffered during three long years-along with Khadija of course - she died soon. The privations had ruined her tender health. She was buried in the general graveyard of al-Ma'lat at Mecca, and the grave is still shown.

2. Sauda

337. Sauda bint Zam'a was a Meccan of the tribe of 'Amir ibn Lu'aiy. She was first married to a certain as-Sukran ibn 'Amr. It is said that it was she who embraced Islam first, and it was she who was the cause of the conversion of her husband. Both were persecuted in the town, and both went to Abyssinia for refuge. Reports are contradictory : some say that there he apostatized and embraced Christianization, others deny that. Even those who speak of Christianization, do not give details as to how and why. But all agree that when her husband died in Abyssinia, she returned home to Mecca. She was of an advanced age, and the Prophet had several children. At least two of his daughters were not yet married. He preferred an elderly widow to a young wife who perhaps would not command the respect of grown

up children. Those historians who deny the conversion of as-Sukran to Christianity seem not to tarnish the reputation of his tribe later when all of its members became Muslims. If this conjecture is correct, the marriage of the Prophet with Sauda had also the motive of honouring her and recompensing her for her steadfastness to Islam even in difficult circumstances. Historians say, she loved the children of the Prophet, and treated them with a real motherly affection. With the advancing age she became almost deaf, and could hear nothing. The Prophet has left a personal example of the revokable divorce also. It concerns Sauda. But she said to him : There is absolutely no interest for me in conjugal life, but I want to be resurrected on the Dooms Day as your wife; that is my only desire. The prophet at once took her back. She lived long, and it is 19 H., during the caliphate of 'Umar that she breathed her last, and was buried in the graveyard of Madina.

3. 'A'isha

338. 'A'isha, daughter of Abu-Bakr, of the Meccan tribe of taim, was the first wife of the Prophet in polygamous marriage. With Khadija, there was no second wife; and he married Sauda only after the death of Khadija and the monogamy continued. this marriage with 'A'isha took place in the year 2 before the Hijra, while she was still a minor, and it was many years later when she reached puberty that she was sent to the house of the Prophet, in Madina. What was the reason that prompted him to ask for her hand to her parents?

339. Manifestly there was no motive of carnal desires, since there was no question of married life with her in the immediate future. The time was most difficult and of utmost gravity : Abu-Talib was replaced by the inimical Abu-Lahab as head of the tribe, who had

outlawed the Prophet, his own nephew; the attempt to find asylum in Ta'if had completely failed, and the Prophet was at that time living as the protected person of a certain non-Muslim Meccan. Seeking a powerful alliance was also not the reason, since historians affirm that the Taim were the least important of the tribes of Mecca, and a poet cut even a satirical joke by saying that the Taim are not even invited in consultation when important decisions are to take.

340. Abu-Bakr was the most intimate friend of the Prophet since before Islam, and each visited the family of the other habitually. So the Prophet knew 'A'isha since her birth, and how with age she was showing an extraordinary intelligence. She was one of those rare children of the epoch who were born in a Muslim family, therefore a born Muslim. By marrying her, the Prophet wanted to cement with Abu-Bakr his already intimate relations, and wanted also to train the youthful 'A'isha in a learned doctor of Muslim theology and law. And as she was still very young, it could reasonably be hoped that she would survive long after the Prophet, (in fact she died some 47 years after her husband). And the hopes were in fact realized. She was a very pious lady, passing her time in prayers and fasting. She was so generous that, during the caliphate, when she received her semestrial pension, she spent it on the same day on the poor. A maid-servant of hers reports : One day she received the pension that the caliph 'Umar sent, and she directed me to give so much of it to this, so much of it to that, until there remained absolutely nothing. When I told her : Madam, you are fasting today, and there is nothing at home for this evening at the fast-break. She replied : Why did you not tell me that before? No matter, God is great!

341. As to her learning, she is considered as the

best knower of her time of not only the Muslim law--her speciality--but also of Arabic poetry, history of pre-Islamic Arabia, mathematics, medicine among other subjects. Greatest of Muslim jurists, when confronted with difficult and complicated problems, consulted her and were normally quite satisfied. Reports say, when the opinion of some Muslim jurist of the epoch was reported other, many a time she at once criticized and pointed out the defect of the reasoning of the jurist, and the latter had to admit. Of course she is one of the best knowers of the sayings and doings of the Prophet, and is considered by the posterity as a great Muhaddith. We have seen, she was intelligent and learned. It is reported a time when the veil was not yet promulgated for Muslim women, that one day 'Uyaina ibn al-Hisn al-Fazari came to pay a 'A'isha. Seeing her, 'Uyaina had the impudence to say : O Mohammad, will you cede me this little rose (Humaira'); I shall cede to you any of my wives which you may prefer?--This incident implies that she was also very beautiful and attractive.

342. She was thin and lean, and this caused her once a very serious problem. In the other 5 H., she accompanied the Prophet in the expedition against the Banu'l-Mustaliq. During the return journey, one day she had gone, in the early hours of the morning, for a natural need, and when she returned, she saw that the caravan had already left. The servants who were charged to place the planquin of 'A'isha on the back of her camel, did not notice that she was not inside; as said she was very lean. Helpless and in complete despair, she covered herself with a piece of cloth that she had, and lied on the ground. Sometime later a Muslim, one of the last members of the camp passed by, and noticing her there alone was shocked and feared that something very serious must have happened. He called her, and when he learnt the incident, he let his camel sit, and went a bit

away, so that 'A'isha rides it without feeling shy; then took the camel by its nose-rope and marched himself on foot, and soon rejoined the Muslim army, either when it was still marching, or when it had just arrived at the next halting place, before noon, and people were unloading their camels. The news naturally spread in the camp, and at first nobody found in it anything suspicious. One will remember Ibn Ubaiy, who was to be crowned king of Madina, just before the Hijra of the Prophet, and that the project was abandoned when people found in the Prophet a change for the better. Evidently Ibn Ubaiy never forgot and never forgave, and during all his life the Prophet continuously had had worries on his part. This Ibn Ubaiy began creating a scandal at the expense of 'A'isha, and people began talking of it. At last the news of the talk was reported in Madina to the Prophet. He did not say to her anything, but she at once noticed that a cold reserve had replaced the old warmth of love, and finding it unsupportable she asked the permission of the Prophet to pass some days with her parents. The Prophet made necessary enquiry, and asked the maid-servant of A'isha and other persons, and nobody had ever seen or found the least thing to reproach 'A'isha. Finding him in the impossibility to know the truth, and impossibility also of stopping the public talk, the Prophet was annoyed, and at last went to the house of Abu-Bakr to see her and her parents. There in the presence of her parents, he told A'isha : If you have really committed an error, it is better to ask God for pardon. God from whom nothing is concealed : and better Here than in the Hereafter. 'A'isha was overwhelmed; she said to her parents : "Reply him". They said : Our dear child, what can we reply for a thing of which we have no knowledge? Wounded in her amour-propre, she recovered her control, and made a short vigorous speech, in which she affirmed her innocence by saying that she need no even talk of her innocence, that she leaves everything to God the

Omniscient and Omnipresent, and she would add nothing! Everybody then saw that the Prophet was overtaken by a trance which was the usual sign of the revelations. Soon he came back to himself, and congratulated 'A'isha, and said that God had attested her chastity (of Quran 24/1-20). She returned with the Prophet to his house and recovered all the affection and love as before.

343. We shall revert to her again under N° 10, to show how she loved justice above everything else. In her early years, she seems to have been sportive, and it is reported that once she engaged a contest in running with the Prophet. and it was she who outdistanced the Prophet. Many years later, she ran once again along with the Prophet, having grown heavier with age, she lost this time; and the loving Prophet told her smilingly : This is for that occasion!

4. Hafsa

344. Hafsa, daughter of 'Umar, a Meccan of the tribe of Banu 'Adi, was married to a good Muslim, who fell martyr in the battle of Uhud. She was still young, so the father began searching after a suitable husband for her. Her suggested first to his intimate friend, Abu-Bakr, who however did not reply anything. Then 'Umar suggested to 'Uthman, so-in-law of the Prophet, who had just lost his wife after a long illness. He excused himself; he was cherishing the hope to marry another daughter of the Prophet. 'Umar felt wounded, and complained to the Prophet that his best friends refuse to marry his daughter, who lacks no qualities. The Prophet was moved and said : "Never mind, I shall give to 'Uthman a wife better than your daughter, and to your daughter a better husband than 'Uthman". He wanted to honour 'Uthman by giving him his second daughter, and honouring 'Umar by marrying his widowed daughter.

Everybody was pleased. Later Abu-Bakr also explained his silence to 'Umar by saying : I thought the Prophet was intending to marry your daughter himself, and I did not want to disclose that prematurely. Naturally 'Umar understood it perfectly well, and the old friendship revived afresh. Hafsa was 22 years old when she married the Prophet, and she was inferior to none in intelligence. She was one of those rare ladies who knew reading and writing number of reports on the sayings and doings of the Prophet. Later the caliph 'Umar used to consult her in legislative measures concerning particularly women. She lived long, and died in the year 45 H., at the age of 64.

5. Zainab Mother of the Destitutes

345. Zainab, daughter of Khzaima, belonged to the great tribe of Najd, 'Amir ibn Sa'sa'a. She was married in Mecca, in the very family of the Prophet. In the year 2 H., her husband 'Ubaidallah ibn al-Harith ibn al-Muttalib fell martyr in the battle of Badr. As a Muslim, she remained in Madina, and did not want to return to her family of pagans in Najd. We have seen above, how at this juncture the relations of Islam had deteriorated with the said tribe, how it had treacherously massacred the group of Muslim missionaries at Bi'r Ma'una, and how later two Muslims of this same tribe were killed by the only Muslim who had survived in the massacre of Bi'r-Ma'una--because he had gone tending the camels of the group in a pasture and was not present at the moment--yet in ignorance of their conversion. It was urgent to do something and let not things continue to deteriorate by action and reaction. In taking Zainab in his marriage, the Prophet thought he would attenuate a bit the hostility of her tribe to Islam. In fact she was very much respected, and for her great generosity had earned even before Islam the surname of "Mother of the

Destitutes" (Umm al-Masakin). She was not keeping well, and in fact only three months after the marriage she died at Madina, at the age of 30. With the death of Khadija and Zainab, the Prophet was left with only three wives : Sauda, 'A'isha and Hafsa.

6. Umm Salma Hind

346. Umm Salama, daughter of Abu Umaiyah, was a Meccan of the important tribe Banu Makhzum, and a close relative of Khalid ibn al-Walid. She and her husband were from among very early converts to Islam, and passionately devoted to its cause. the couple had to flee to Abyssinia first, to escape persecution of the family, and returning back, they again wanted to migrate to Madina. Abu Salma could depart, but she was detained by her parents, who would not permit her child to go with, and naturally she would not part with her child. In the struggle with the rude parents, the hand of the poor child was dislocated, and was lost for the whole life. Parents could stop her from parting, but could not stop her from talking. She went daily to the shrine of the Ka'ba, and there cursed the family, invoking that vultures should come down and devour them. Not knowing how to get rid of it, the family at last said : Go wherever you like. She set out alone to Madina, and rejoined her husband there. Her worries had no end. Soon after, in the battle of Uhud (3 H.) her husband fell martyr. The fortunate lady began again to weep and lament. "although she was advanced in age, and had several children", the Prophet who esteemed much the family, decided to console her by marrying her. This was an unexpected honour to her, and although she had loved intensely her former husband, she could not refuse the offer. Khalid ibn al-Walid was an inveterate enemy of Islam, but when the Prophet became his close relative through marriage, his enmity became hesitant, and two

years later he finished by embracing Islam. Umm Salma was also one of those rare cases of ladies knowing reading. She lived long, and died in 61., fifty years after the death of the Prophet. She was a poet, and she had left to posterity many a tradition on the life of the Prophet. She had a daughter from her previous marriage, called Zainab, who became later one of the celebrated jurists of Islam. She was born in abyssinia, and knew the language of the country also. Umm salama had also visited churches in Abyssinia, and later described how they were decorated with the portraits of the saints and other Christian personalities.

7. Zainab bint Jahsh

347. Second of the same name, Zainab; her father was an Arab from North Arabia, but had settled in Mecca for some personal reasons, and had married an aunt of the Prophet, viz. Umaina daughter of Abd al-Muttalib. Of the early converts to Islam, all the family of Jahsh migrated to Madina. She was about 36 years old, and it is not at all clear whether she was a widow, or divorced, or unmarried virgin. the Prophet wanted to ameliorate the situation of slaves in the new society which Islam was creating and, among others, decided that a freed and a free-born should have no difference. Prejudices are hard to die, unless a great shock is given. So he asked his cousin, daughter of his aunt, Zainab to marry Zaid ibn Haritha, the freed slave and adopted son of the Prophet. Zainab wanted to marry the Prophet himself, and had made a vow that if some day that desire were to realize, she would fast for six months! Naturally she could not tell that to anybody. In these circumstances, the suggestion of the Prophet did not please her; but as very devout Muslims, she and her parents finished by agreeing to it. Of an aristocratic family, according to historians she had "a sharp tongue", and all did not go

well at home with Zaid. Learning the difficulties, the Prophet invented from time to time, and recommended the parties to moderation. Zaid had married the negro Umm Aiman, who was a maid of the mother of the Prophet, and had given birth to a son Usama, a commander and very much loved by the Prophet. As usual, one day the Prophet went to the house of Zaid, apparently to arrange affairs between the couple, for Zaid had not only complained of the behaviour of Zainab, but also declared that he intended to divorce her; and the Prophet had tried to calm him. Zaid was not at home, and when he learnt that from Zainab at the door of the house, he returned back, saying: "Glory to God alone the transformer of hearts!" The historians add that Zainab, in spite of her 36 years, looked very beautiful in her yellow robe. Zainab over-heard the phrase, and when her husband returned, she told him what had happened. Zaid misunderstood the sense of what the Prophet had said, who had wanted to say, that it is strange that Zaid carries on so well with his old negro wife, and not with this beautiful blonde. Zaid ran to the Prophet and said, he would divorce Zainab if he liked. He again calmed him, and recommended moderation. After sometime, when Zaid could no longer pull on with Zainab, he divorced her, and the Prophet was placed before a fait accompli. The Prophet was sorry that he had forced Zainab to marry Zaid, and wanted now to make some reparation. So when the legal period of waiting before remarriage terminated, he asked her hand in marriage, she was so glad at the realization of heart's desire, that she asked the messenger to wait. She first went to her room, and there celebrated a service of Prayer of Thanks-giving to God. She returned, gratified the messenger with a handsome gift, and replied in affirmative to the proposal of the Prophet. This caused another shock to the old pagan prejudices, which thought that an adopted son is like the full son, therefore the divorced wife of the adopted son was in no

way lawful to the adopting father. The Quran had abolished that rule, but it required a very prestigious example to deal it the final death blow. That was now accomplished. In spite of the short duration of the marriage of Zainab with Zaid, it has impressed Islam so much, that freed slaves never encountered prejudices in the society, and they have given numerous dynasties of kings in different parts of the Islamic world. Zainab died in 20 H.

8. Juwairiya

348. Juwairiya, daughter of al-Harith, belonged to the tribe of Banu'l Mustaliq, which was prominent in its hostility to Islam. After the expulsion of the Banu'n-Nadir Jews from Madina, the Mustaliq succumbed to the temptation of becoming mercenaries of these Jews, and wanted also to participate in the siege of the Khandaq. The Prophet had gone to the North of Madina, to punish the inhabitants of Dumat'al-Jandal, who were deliberately harassing the victual caravans coming to Madina, apparently at the instigation of the Jews of Khaibar. The idea was, when the Prophet is in the extreme North of Arabia, with a handful of men with him, others should attack Madina-Ghatafan, Mecca, Sulaim and all the others--and even to encircle the Prophet, away from his headquarters. But the Prophet somehow learnt the news when he was in the territory of the Ghatalan, and hastily returned to Madina, and began digging the ditch and taking, other defensive measures. Among others, he led a detachment to disperse the mobilizations of the Banu'l-Mustaliq, as a preventive measure. The tribe did not expect it, so it fell an easy prey to the Muslim army led by the Prophet himself. Men fled, but the families and herds of beasts were captured. The Prophet wanted to win the tribe, and not increase in its hostility. The prisoners of war were

divided as booty, and to incite the soldiers to renounce on their belligerent rights something more important than a mere recommendation was necessary. The Prophet wanted to win the tribe, and not increase in its hostility. The prisoners of war were divided as booty, and to incite the soldiers to renounce on their belligerent rights something more important than a mere recommendation was necessary. The Prophet decided to marry the young daughter of the chief of the tribe. All her relatives immediately became also relatives of the Prophet. Immediately also the soldiery liberated them all. Through the liberated families, the news of the clemency of the Prophet, reached the menfolk, who came to Madina, and declared their conversion, and became staunch supporters of Islam. Juwairiya is reputed to be a very pious lady, spending her time in prayers and fasting. She lived long, till 57 H., and has left to posterity a certain number of traditions on the life and work of the Prophet.

9. Umm Habiba

349. She was a Meccan, of the tribe of Banu Umaiya, and daughter of Abu Sufyan, (sister of the future caliph Mu'awiya). She and her husband were among the very early Muslims. The couple was obliged to take refuge in Abyssinia. Her husband was a drunkard--alcohol was not yet prohibited in Islam--and in Abyssinia he went over to Christianity, forcing his young wife also to do likewise. She resisted very firmly, as we have mentioned above. The husband soon died drowned. Thereupon the Prophet wanted to honour her, and asked her hand in marriage. The Negus celebrated the marriage in *absentia*, and sent her with the Muslim envoys to Madina. She was so glad of the honour that when a slave girl of the Negus came to announce her the news of the offer of marriage, she gave all the bracelets

and jewels she was wearing to the slave girl. This dates from the year 6 H. Soon the truce of Hudaibiya was concluded, which was later violated by the Meccans. When Abu Sufyan returned from Syria to Mecca and learnt the stupidity of the Meccans in violating the truce, he wanted to arrange the affairs: He went to Madina, and wanted that his daughter intervene with the Prophet in favour of the Meccans, so that the truce could be renewed. She loved Islam above family ties and everything else; she even did not allow her father to sit on the carpet of the Prophet, and refused to do anything for the Meccans, saying that it lies with the Prophet. As to the Prophet, he kept silent, and gave absolutely no reply, and Abu Sufyan returned without knowing whether it was war or peace. (We have spoken above how Mecca was occupied by the Prophet). Umm Habiba passed her life as a very pious lady, and she lived long, breathing her last in 59 H., after having transmitted to posterity a considerable number of precious informations on the life of the Prophet.

10. Safiya bint Huyaiy

350. She was originally a Jewess. It was in 7H when the Prophet reduced Khaibar to submission, she fell in booty. We have already seen above, that the Prophet took her in marriage--and she was also desiring that having seen that in a dream--and this attenuated very much the rigour of the conquering army in Khaibar. The Prophet told her that he was sorry for the Jews of Khaibar, that he did not want war with them, and explained how he was obliged to do that for the security of the Muslim State and religion. The other wives of the Prophet attest that she was a devout Muslim. Her cuisine was very reputed in the family of the Prophet. She was generous, but no spend-thrift. She lived till 50 H., and had economized considerably. She had a

nephew, who remained attached to Judaism. Profiting by the permission that Islam gives to be charitable to parents even when non-Muslim, and the possibility in Islam to make testament in favour of those who have no share in the heritage, she bequeathed a third of her belongings to this nephew. Some Muslims resented, but 'A'isha, wife of the Prophet, intervened and insisted that the testament should be executed. And that was done. That shows the sense of justice of 'A'isha, this in spite of the fact that there were sometimes bitter exchange of words between her and Safiya, during the life of the Prophet. One day 'A'isha called her for some reason "O daughter of the Jewess". She was hurt, and complained to the Prophet, who suggested her for future a reply: "My father is the prophet Aaron, my uncle the prophet Moses, and husband the prophet Muhammad; which of you has such a distinction?" But 'A'isha was not so easy to silence, and said: "This reply does not come from your brain, O daughter of the Jewess". But later they became good friends, and 'A'isha asked Safiya on her deathbed to pardon her if she had ever offended her; and Safiya also did the same and asked pardon of all the wives of the Prophet that were still alive. Safiya too has left us a certain number of reports on the Prophet. She died in the year 50 H.

11. Maimuna

351. Maimuna bint al-Harith belonged to the tribe of 'Amir ibn Sa'sa'a of Najd, and was the half-sister of Zainab Mother of the Destitutes (N° 5). These were nine sisters, and all were married to chiefs of different big tribes. She was a widow at Mecca, when the Prophet went there in the year 7 H., for the 'umra (Little Pilgrimage), in conformity to the stipulation of the truce of al-Hudaibiya Zainab, her half-sister had died, and it is possible that the Prophet wanted to have personal

relations with the tribe of 'Amir ibn Sa'sa'a, as also with the tribes in which his sisters-in-law, sisters of this wife, were married. Incidentally he seems to have sought a reconciliation with Mecca. In fact, during his visit, he had to remain there only for three days. When the stipulated time expired, a delegation of the pagans of Mecca arrived, demanding his departure. He told them: "What matters you a little prolongation? I have just married. I invite the whole town of Mecca to the nuptial feast". But the delegation was adamant, and said the feast did not interest them. The Prophet did not succeed to impress the Meccans, but the effort was there. It may be suggested that at that time the Prophet was in occupation of the town, with 1500 armed men, and all the Meccans had evacuated their houses, and were living in bivouac on the hills and plains of the suburbs. A less scrupulous commander could have perpetuated his occupation, and not let the "former" inhabitants return to their home and hearth. But he was a Prophet, whom the Quran gives the title of "the Mercy unto the Worlds". He could not give a less worthy example to humanity. Maimuna died in the year 51., and she too has reported many a Hadith on the life and time of the Prophet.

352. These are the eleven wives of the Prophet, but two had died earlier and at no time more than nine were together in the house.

PERSONAL HABITS OF THE PROPHET

353. Reports concur that the Prophet liked cleanliness, both in his dress and his body. He grew his beard. Sometimes he let grow his hairs also, and then combed them and kept them in proper condition.

354. He walked quickly, and his companions had

difficulty to keep pace with him, but he spoke very slowly, so much so that according to a narrator : "one could count the number of the letters of each word he pronounced". He wanted that everybody fully understood what he said, and every word of his constituted law. He used a simple and elegant yet unaffected style in his talk, be that with individuals or when he addressed a whole group.

355. At home he had very simple habits : he repaired his sandals with his own hands; he milked the goats himself, and did not burden his attendant with this additional work. His personal servant, the devout Anas says : "I lived with him for ten years; not a single time did he say to me : why you did, or why you did not do that. He was always kind to me."

356. He loved little children, wherever he saw them, and made jokes with them to please them. Naturally he loved also his own grand-children, al-Hasan and al-Hussain. Sometimes he held one of them in his arms even during the prayer : when he went in prostration, he let him stand, and when he stood up, he took him again in his arm. A bit older, they ran hither and thither in the mosque even during the congregational service, and sometimes they passed between the two legs of the Prophet, who let them do what they liked.

357. He was constant in his friendships, and never despised even old ladies who bored him; one of them held him by his hand, and did not let him go, and he supported with good grace.

358. During his travels he remained in touch with everybody, and made them rejoice by visits. On one such occasion, he came to see his faithful friend Jabir, who

was on his old camel. Assuming a very serious attitude--but one at once perceived that it was a mere joke--he asked : Would you sell me your camel? Yes, but on condition of delivering it only on return to Madina! For how much? Make your offer! for one dirham? O Messenger of God, you want to cheat me! Take two dirhams? O no! three...four...five, until he said : Take forty dirhams? Jabir consented. Then he began talking about other things, and sometime later left him to go see somebody else in the caravan. On return to Madina, Jabir related to his wife all the pleasant behaviour of the Prophet during the voyage. She was over-scrupulous, and insisted that her husband should not take it as a joke, but should take the camel to the house of the Prophet. when the Prophet received the news, he smiled, ordered his cashier to pay the stipulated 40 dirhams to Jabir, and also to leave him the camel, as a gift from him. The camel lived for many more long years, and whenever Jabir thought of the affair, he was moved with the souvenir.

359. He was very kind to animals also. One day during the march of an expeditionary force, a companion of him brought to him a bird with several younglings, and on demand told : "I saw them in a nest, on my approach the mother flew away; I took the younglings in my handkerchief, whereupon the mother began hovering over my head, and when I placed the handkerchief on the ground and opened it, the mother bird fell down, and I covered her also, and all are now here". Thereupon the Prophet ordered him to return them all at once to the nest. At another occasion he saw a wild bitch with younglings sucking milk of the mother; the Prophet posted a man, with the instruction not to let any member of the army disturb the animal, and remain there till all the army passed away. One day in Madina a camel came running and began kneeling before the

Prophet, and at heel were some people seeking to capture it and take it back. On demand, they said : "It has become very old, and is unable to be used for pulling water from the well, so we want to slaughter it." The Prophet got pity, and said : Leave it on the pasture, after so long a service to you, it merits to retire on "pension". The owner consented, and took the camel back.

360. During a journey, he was with a small group of friends, and they purchased a sheep from an occasional herd that they encountered in the desert. One of the companion said : "I shall slaughter it". The other said : "I shall skin it". A third undertook to roast and prepare the meal. And so on. The Prophet said : "As to me, I shall go round and collect dry wood to make fire." Others said : "No, no, that also shall be done by us" but the Prophet said : "I must do that, it is not proper that you work and I give no helping hand".

361. He liked joking, and everybody enjoyed that. There was a companion rather a simpleton and not very handsome. One day the Prophet saw him in the market, and approached him from the back and pressed him in his arms, and said with loud voice : Who would buy this slave? The man turned to see who it was, and seeing the Prophet, he was over-joyed, and began pressing with his back the bosom of the Prophet, then said : "But O messenger of God, you won't realize much money in selling me !" the Prophet let him go, and said : "But in the sight of God, your value is very high".

362. One day a stranger came to see the Prophet, and the latter gave him hospitality and also a bed to pass the night. It was a silly enemy. He soiled the bed, and left the house very early in the morning, wishing to avenge his imaginary grievances. Sometime later he remembered that he had forgotten his sword in the

house of the Prophet. So he stealthily returned back, to see that the Prophet was cleaning and washing the bed with his own hands. Seeing the "guest", the Prophet said : "Here is your sword." And returned it to him without uttering a word of reproach. The rude Bedouin was touched, offered his regrets and embraced forthwith Islam.

363. One day he saw in the mosque a man looking very ugly, with hairs uncombed, with beard un-arranged. The Prophet made him a sign to go out and do the necessary toilet. Sometime later the man returned from the Hairdresser's, and the Prophet said : "Is this not better than to look like the terrifying devil?" At another occasion he saw a man in a very poor condition, with torn dress and the like. On demand, he said : "O messenger of God, not that I am poor; I am a well-to-do person, but I prefer giving all in charity, and contenting me with shabby dress". The Prophet said : "Not like that; God likes to see the traces of His benefit on His slave!"

364. Pages and pages could be filled with such meaningful and edifying little narrations. But that would perhaps do to have an idea of the personality of the Prophet of Islam as a human being, as a model of social conduct!

CHAPTER 13

THE SOCIETY OF THE EPOCH

365. The nations of today were the tribe of yesterday. In Arabia of the time of the Prophet tribalism ruled supreme, and genealogical affiliation was the card of identity, the passport, and was the order of the day. Everywhere it was the tribe that counted, and not the locality where they lived. One was logical in thinking that the earth was for man, and not the man for the earth.

366. The tribes would be divided into developed and primitive according to whether they were settled or nomadic. In the beginning all must have been nomadic, and if some found a place with abundant water and perpetual pastures, he did not require to roam in search of these primary needs of subsistence after the exhaustion of one place of his provisional settlement. Others who did not find in the Arabian desert such amenities, were obliged to remain vagabond. Both the settled people and the nomadic groups had their herds of domesticated animals, chiefly the camel and the sheep and goats of different kinds. But the settled persons had greater leisure, and found time to plantation of date-palms and cultivation of cereals, among other things.

367. Not that different tribes had these different modes of life; members of the same tribe could be and were in fact divided into the two kinds of inhabitants. I was astonished in 1946 to see that the famous tribe of Quraish, of the time of the Prophet (and inhabitant of

Mecca) existed still today, in the suburbs of Mecca, but nomadic and Beduoin. This proves what the classical historian al-Baladhuri wrote (in the *Ansab al-Ashraf*) that the Quraish were divided into the Quraish al-Bitah (those settled in valleys) and Quraish az-Zawahir (the nomadic).

368. In a tribe, be that settled or nomadic, all persons were not descendants of the same ancestor. There were slaves, male and female; and there were girls obtained in marriage from other tribes. In addition to these natural "strangers", the Arab had a very high sense of hospitality; and his sense of honour prevented him from delivering his guest to those who pursued him. The Asylum was therefore a sacroasacred institution all over Arabia, and one voluntarily sacrificed one's life to safeguard one's honour. This led to the fact that many a foreigner took refuge in tribes other than his, and settled there permanently. These protected persons, allies, and other kinds of "refugees" were found among settled tribes as well as among the nomads. They could marry among their hosts, and gradually naturalized in them. It was so in Mecca and Ta'if and this was so in Madina also.

369. A curious phenomenon is that the inhabitants of Madina, which locality is rather in the North of Arabia, hailed from South, and were of Yemenite origin, whereas the inhabitants of Mecca and Ta'if traced their descent from North Arabian tribes. There were jealousies in the two sections of Arabs, but they seem to speak the same language, and the inter-marriage was decreasing the differences.

370. Dialects there ought to have been, and difference of pronunciation also. Since they were illiterate in general, pre-Islamic documents are non-

existant, except some extremely rare inscriptions. Authors of the Islamic period have preserved some recollections, rather vague. One thing is sure to me : The great poet Imru'ul-Qais, who had taken refuge with Byzantine emperor Justinian and who is said to have died at Ankara (assassinated according to the legend, since the daughter of the emperor is said to have fallen in love with him, to incur the displeasure of the monarch) could not speak the language which is found in the famous Qasida-poem attributed to him in the collection of Sab' Mu'allaqat, Imru'ul-Qais was the son of the king of Kinda, in Yemen and had to flee since his country was occupied by the Abyssinians. The inscription of Abraha, Abyssinian governor of Yemen, found on the dam of Marib, is in the Yemenite language, and not in abyssinian. It is published. It is in a foreign language, not the Arabic of the qasida of Imru'ul-Qais.

371. All natural things were there : poetry, proverbs folklore, oral tradition on local history etc. What is astonishing is that the grammar and metric were at the dawn of Islam already developed to perfection, and there has practically been absolutely no change during the last fourteen hundred years. The Quran standardized the language and the grammar and the spelling and the pronunciation, and the language of the Quran is the same as we read in journals today or hear in radio-broadcast. This state of affair is extremely important in the sense that the language of the Quran is comprehensible to every Arabic-knowing person, and there is no need of conjectures and far-fetched hypotheses to explain its meaning, as is the case for texts in other languages, ancient or modern, Greek, Hebrew, Sanskrit, English etc. For a lasting religion, for the teaching of one after whom there is to be no new Prophet no less stable language could suit.

Social affairs

372. In the absence of training schools, the old female members of the family served as midwives, and they did their work perfectly well. As soon as a child was born, a male member of the family--sometimes even the Prophet himself--pronounced in the right ear of the child the formulas of *adhan*, and in the left ear those of the *iqama* (which both consist of the profession of the monotheistic faith, and call to the submission to God, to well-being in both the worlds). The very first thing that a new-born heard was this good counsel. This may have been the reformed form of some paganistic formulas in the pre-Islamic Arabia, but information is lacking.

373. At Madina, one gave chewed date-fruit to the child, perhaps also the honey, before the mother giving it her breast to suck.

374. There was a little ceremony to give the child a name. The name given at that occasion could change later on, and many things could add also to it. In fact every Arab, boy or girl was generally called with the name of the father: "o son of so-and-so", "o daughter of so-and-so" were the habitual way of addressing a person; the personal name was rare to use. Further, there were teknonyms (*kunya*) : "o father of so-and-so", "o mother of so-and-so", and this since early age without actually having been married, much less having really, had a child of that name. These teknonyms were more normally formed with the name of the first son; father or mother of this or that "girl" was rare, although it did exist. 'Umar for instance was called Abu-Hafs (Hafsa was his daughter, married to the Prophet), and in spite of the existence of male children, his teknonym was coined from the name of his prestigious daughter. Fictitious teknonyms also existed. 'Ali got the name of Abu-Turab

(father of the dust), from the Prophet--who found him one day sleeping on the ground and getting dirty--and he would not abandon that name. Or Abu-Huraira (father of the little cat), because, it is said, one day he had brought from the desert the younglings of a wild cat, and the family and friends were so amused with the name that it never left him, he using it ultimately himself. If one did not know the name of the real father of the person whom one addressed, one used normally the name of the tribe, and said "o son of (the tribe) Quraish", "o daughter of Quraish", and even "o brother/sister of Quraish". It did not mean the real brother or sister of that ancestor but his descendant. One will remember that in the Quran the virgin Mary is also called "daughter of 'Imran" and "sister of Harun"; Harun (Aaron), who was the son of 'Imran (Amram), was the ancestor, and not what the word literally said.

375. the personal names meant both abstract ideas and concrete objects. They have not changed in Islam, although a few names were discarded for religious reasons. "Abd shams" (worshipper of the sun), "Abd al-Ka'ba" (worshipper of the ka'ba), "Abd al-Jinn" (worshipper of the Jinn) could naturally not be tolerated in Islam, not even "worshipper of Muhammad" etc. The Prophet recommended change on social and aesthetic grounds also, and he never tolerated among his disciples the prevalent names of Zalim (oppressor), ghawi (dissipated), Kalb (dog) and the like. (He changed names even of localities of the same ground). Names of trees, stones, wild animals however continued in Islam after having been in common use before the Islam. For instance Talha, Samura, 'Ausaja, Thumama, Harmala are names of plants; Asad, Bakr, Th'alba, Arqam are names of animals. Hajar means a stone.

'Aqiqa (shaving the hair of the head)

376. Some days or some weeks after the birth, a family feast took place, on the occasion of rasing for the first time hair of the new-born. A sheep was slaughtered, the meat was partly given in charity and partly consumed in the family. And silver (rarely gold) weighing as much as the weight of the hairs cut was also given in charity. In pre-Islamic Arabia the blood of the slaughtered animal was anointed on the head of the baby, in Islam it has been discarded, or at least replaced by some perfume, particularly the safran water (of Abu Dawud and Malik).

377. Another ceremony, confined to male children, is the circumcision. No time limit is fixed, yet it takes place in the early years, when the boy has not yet the sense of nudity. According to the Bible, it was instituted by Abraham, as a symbol of the pact of submission to God, but traces of such a notion are non-existent in the pre-Islamic Arabian folklore much less in Islam. It is considered as a hygienic measure.

378. Other occasions of family rejoicing existed, such as when the child gets its first lesson to learn reading and writing, when he has finished reading the entire text of the Quran for the first time, when he has observed his first fast and the like. But these may be later habits. (Naturally finishing the reading of the Quran could not take place in the life of the Prophet, when Quranic revelations continued still).

379. Marriage provides one of the most important occasion of festivity to the family and to the society at large. It was so in pre-Islamic Arabia, and it continued in Islam, both among Bedouins and town folk. Some incidents of the life of the Prophet could be cited here.

One day an emigrant of Ta'if, al-Mughira ibn Shu'ba informed the Prophet that he had demanded the hand of a Madinan girl, whereupon he asked: "Have you already seen her?" On the negation, he continued: "Go and see her before betrothal, for it is more prudent: "Go and see her before betrothal, for it is more prudent, not to regret later on". Another companion of the Prophet speaks of his own conduct: he had seen secretly the girl without her suspecting to be looked upon, and that he demanded her hand later on.

380. In Madina there were professional singing women (perhaps slaves), who played also music on tambourins and cymbals. One day seeing the arrival of the Prophet, such a singer changed the poem she was reciting--exploits of heroes of a war--and said: and we have a Prophet who knows what will happen tomorrow. the Prophet interrupted her, and said: "Sing what you were in the course of singing, and not this". We learn than normally there was a night procession with burning torches, probably for the bride going from the house of her parents to that of her husband. One day the Prophet told to his wife 'A'isha: "I was present in the marriage of your cousin, how is it that there was no music? the Madinans like that!"

381. It goes without saying that brides were made up and painted carefully, and well perfumed. I do not know if the plant of *darim* was already known in the time of the Prophet at Mecca or Madina; in the time of the botanist ad-Dinawari tooth brushes made of the branches of this tree were used by women to paint red their lips. Many amorous poems are cited in dictionaries singing in praise of the lips reddened by the *darim* wood. Bridegrooms were also made up and put on gaudy dress. Many people, relatives, friends and others attended the marriage and the meal which followed.

The marriage took place normally in the house of the bride; mosque is rarely mentioned in this connection. The bride did not appear, but her consent was obtained by her near relatives: father, uncles, brothers etc. A sermon was pronounced by the person officiating at the marriage, and he obtained the consent of the bride and of the representative of her family, and also that of the bridegroom, and it required at least two witnesses. There is no precise information whether at Madina there were written documents of the contract of marriage, at that epoch. The Prophet has made the *mahr* as a condition since qua non of Muslim marriage; it goes to the bride exclusively. And since in Islam the property of the wife remains separate, and the husband has no control over it, the *mahr* serves to a certain extent to diminish inconsiderate divorces. After the declaration by the person officiating the marriage that the contract is concluded, and the invocation of: God bless you, it was a habit to throw on the head and around the husband dried date-fruits, crystal sugar and the like. Once in the presence of the Prophet, people did not participate in "plundering" it, but he encouraged them in this joyous demonstration by his own example. The Prophet has strongly recommended that the husband should feast his marriage by a nuptial meal (*walima*), generally on the morning of the arrival of the wife in his house.

382. The birth of children gave naturally occasion to rejoicing and festivity. According to their age, they received playthings, which differed according to whether it was boy or girl. 'A'isha, when married, brought to the house of the Prophet her old playthings, including winged horses, which she showed to young girls that came to visit her from time to time. One day the Prophet noticed them, and said: "What horses have wings?" The ready reply was: "How, you are a prophet and you do not know that the horses of Solomon had

wings?"--Probably there was already in existence a little ceramic industry. The boys received little arcs and dummy arrows to shoot. There is mention in Madina of *kurrak*, a sort of football, the ball being made of pieces of stuff. Another common sports was *dirkala*, which seems to have been played by lances. Wrestling, swimming, racing of men, of horses and of camels--perhaps also of donkeys--were the many attractions. On 'Id days, the negro boys dancing with their lances was so much liked that even the wives of the Prophet saw them.

383. As to food, the Prophet liked very much the *tharid*, which seems to mean the bread boiled in soup with apparently some meat. He liked also roasted meat. There is sometimes question of the egg of austrich, which existed then in wild state. People living on the coast got fish, but its import as far in the interior as Madina is not mentioned, except dried fish. Dried meat is also mentioned : If one could not consume the totality of the slaughtered animal, the remaining flesh was dried in the sun, and thus it was conserved for long time. Vinegar was also a favourite of the Prophet. One comes across olive and cheese also in the life of the Prophet.

384. Dying the hairs of the aged persons was well-known since before Islam. The fertile Yemen produced a black dye, known already in the life of 'Abd al-Muttalib, grandfather of the Prophet. The 'leaf of the *kutum* plant produced a red dye. Henna was used by women to paint fingers. Rings, bracelets, necklaces, ear-rings and many other objects were in use in the womenfolk.

385. There was a race course in Madina, which was ordinarily used for the station of in-coming camel caravans. The post where the Prophet took place to watch is now commemorated by a mosque called Mosque of the Racing (*masjid as-sabaq*).

386. The annual fairs were not merely commercial, but had many attractions. The fair 'Ukaz, near Mecca, was particularly famous for it attracted poets to "publish" their compositions or improvisations; orators showed their command over the rhythm and eloquent language; "international court of arbitration" also had its session there, and people came from far off regions to get their litigations decided impartially. Soothsayers and other charlatans also earned their livelihood by telling the future fortune of others, but knowing nothing of the future of their owns slaves.

387. The death gave occasion to other ceremonies and to showing one's last respects to the departing friend or relative. The corpse was washed carefully several times, and enshrouded in several pieces of stuff. A funeral service of prayers was also celebrated. The Prophet refused to attend such a service if the defunct was indebted and did not leave enough money to repay the debts. For all others Muslims, he used to lead himself such a service, both for men and women. the body was not incenerated but buried. After covering the grave with earth, one inculcated a prayers to the departing soul, how to meet the life of the other world. The Muslims believe, that as soon as one is buried, two angels come to make interrogation as to his religion, and this in attendance of the final judgement on the dooms day. So it is recalled to the dead that he should reply to these angels of enquiry that God is his Lord, that Muhammad is his prophet, that Quran is his Book, that the Ka'ba is his orientation for the service of prayer, that he believes in the resurrection, in the Divine judgement, in Paradise and Hell, and so on.

388. In Mecca and Madina, graves are cleared of the remains after a few years, and used for new burials; so the graveyard never expands in the surface. In each of

these two graveyard never expands in the surface. In each of these two holy cities, there is not more than a single graveyard since the last fourteen centuries. Ever since the Ka'ba was fixed as the point of orientation in the prayer, Muslims all over the world lay the dead bodies slightly raised under the left shoulder so that they face the Ka'ba. So the direction of the length of tombs differs according to countries. In the graveyard of Madina, the tomb is now dug East-West, because the Ka'ba is in South from there. But there are still conserved a few tombs dating from the early days of the Hijra, when Ka'ba was not yet adopted, and these graves are North-South (to face the rising sun in the East?)

389. Neighbours provided benevolently the bereaved family with meals for a day or two, and this at the recommendation of the Prophet. There were professionals to mourn and lament a dead, and these were normally of the female sex. The prophet discouraged it as much as he could.

Characteristics of the Society

390. It was a society like any other human society, composed of men good as well as bad. The fact that there were cases of crime--however limited their number--of murder, violation, theft and the like, shows that it was a human society, neither of angels nor of devils. What is remarkable is that it was impressed on every mind to recognize good as good, and evils as evil: one was never proud of his sins and his crimes, and the society and the public opinion obliged people to respect morality. There was no police, but people themselves came to confess their crimes punishable by the highest penalties; they thought it is better to suffer Here than in the Hereafter.

391. There was no alcohol; there was peace at home and in the streets. Man knew what he was doing, and was never degraded in intoxication to the level of beasts. There was no pork, so there was no shamelessness which it engenders.

392. There was no gambling and no interest either. It was forbidden both giving and taking the interest. Interest-free loans are not easy to obtain; the prohibition of giving interest even to non-Muslim usurious lenders constrained Muslims to control their expenditure. This sagacious law destroyed in the first instance the handful of the inhuman people who suck the blood of the society and thrive on dishonest gains. No doubt, gambling and interest may enrich extremely rapidly; Muslims were deprived of this possibility, but proportionately it slowed down also the pace of their indebtedness: one was obliged to live inside one's material means. There could be no clandestine and occult forces to corrupt officials, and through them the administration.

393. For these and all similar reforms, naked sanction of police did not exist; the need of these reforms was inculcated in the minds.

CHAPTER 14

APPRECIATION OF HIS WORK

394. Numerous are religions-even monotheistic religions-in the world. Several of them count today their faithful by hundreds of millions. Islam is the youngest of them. May be it has not yet become numerically the largest, but it is still a living and expanding religion. It has had against it the hostility as all the religions and irreligions of the world, because it has aimed universality and is not limited to a region or a race, and "intrudes" inside every other community. Yet it is not the religion, but the founder of the religion that interests us here.

395. It is rather a rule in world history of religions that one knows little about the life and career of their founders, that these exalted persons have had very little success in their life-time, the expansion of their religions having taken place after their departure from the world, and that the original teachings of these founders of religion have not only come down to us fragmentarily, but also the Faithfuls have required in the course of history to change much of the doctrine and the practical prescriptions, in order to accommodate with changing circumstances.

396. Muhammad makes an exception to these rule, in all the varied aspects in question : Data on his life coming from first-hand witnesses fills volumes, and describes all aspects of his life and his time, treating both personal affairs and social conditions. His success during his own life has been so tremendous that during his Farewell Pilgrimage he could address to some 140,00 Muslims that had come that year to Mecca, not counting many times so much that had remained at home,

because it was not obligatory to go every year for hajj, nor was it obligatory to go that particular year. No doubt the expansion of Islam, after the death of the Prophet has been great - and it is continuing to expand - but the success of the teaching in the life - time of the founder of the religion is as unique. As to the original teaching, the Quran has come down to us in toto, in the original language, and in a manner worthy of confidence. One has required no change during the fourteen centuries of its existence in the original prescriptions, either in its birth place or in any other part of the world. We know how Muhammad prayed, fasted, or made pilgrimage, and the Muslims of our twentieth century do in exactly the same manner these spiritual duties. Like the faithful of any other religion, there are many Muslims who do not practice their religion, sometimes not more than only calling themselves Muslims, yet there is no question to the faithful, not even the non - practicing, to require a change "to adapt to new circumstances". There are reform movements, even in our own epoch, in all religions, but it is curious to observe that if other religions want modifications to modernize, Muslim reformists are unanimous in demanding a return to the original teaching of Muhammad! No greater tribute could be paid to the founder of religion than to acknowledge that his teaching is still valid without requiring least change.

397. There are thousands of books, in different languages of the world, on the biography of the founder of Islam, both by friends and foes. All agree unanimously that Muhammad was a very great man, even if they do not like him on account of his religion being a rival to theirs. Those who have willfully misrepresented him - and there have been very many of them - are in fact indirectly paying him homage; they misrepresent him only because they are afraid that a

true portrait of him would "mislead" their co-religionists, whom they want to dissuade from embracing Islam by telling them baseless stories about him. This sort of dishonest work is continuing even today. What is however amazing that in spite of the means and materials at the disposal of the modern West, this all-out propaganda against the person of Muhammad is not succeeding as it ought to have succeeded in the face of the printed word, spoken broadcast, and shown pictures. We do not know what will happen if Islam had at its disposal the same means and resources as the Christian and communist missionaries, but it is a fact that Islam is spreading even in both the Christian and Communist West with astonishing rapidity. In the thirty years since the end of the Second Great War, England has built over a hundred mosques; France is not lagging far behind. Germany neither. Conversions among American Whites are not less. These converts are found among ambassadors, professors and members of all imaginable professions. No wonder, hundreds of Western tourists embrace Islam every year even in Istanbul, where religious fervour is not so great as in Anatolia.

398. Another characteristic feature of the teaching of Muhammad is that it concerns all walks of life, and is not at all limited to metaphysical doctrines. He prescribes rules for the spiritual life as it prescribes for the temporal one; even politics are not excluded from its purview. The result is that Islam builds the whole man, and not part of it as is the avowed purpose of other religions, Which limit themselves to spiritual aspect of man only, leaving politics to the lay rulers.

399. It may safely be said that the influence of Islam in the daily life and personal behaviour of its faithful is deeper than other religions which, in spite of

their claim to universalism, have not been able to overcome race and colour consciousness of its faithful. I saw one day in 1932, an English muazzin in a London mosque, and he was really proud of selecting for himself the name of Bilal, after the negro muazzin of the time of the Prophet of Islam. What a curious story that a certain Aquil of Finland, settled in Sweden embraced Islam by self - alone, without ever meeting apparently any Muslim; the Frenchman Guenon was initiated into Islam by him. It is the disciples of Guenon that are running "tekkes" in France, Switzerland etc., and have rallied hundreds to Islam, through Islamic mysticism. In fact it is not a Fakhruddin Razi that overwhelms a modern Westerner, but a Muhaiuddin Ibn al - 'Arabe. No wonder if the pagan Hulagu could conquer the Islamic world and destroy the 'Abbasid Baghdad, a handful dervishes charmed his grandson Ghazan Khan into Islam and rallied those conquerors and destroyers of Islam to become the standard - bearers of Islam.

400. If the founders of former religions have each excelled in some human virtue, Muhammad has shown his excellence in so many fields that the student is simply amazed : He was a great and all - round legislator, prescribing rules for all legal questions. He was an organizer, he founded a State from naught and administered it himself. He commanded armies, and defeated enemies often three to fifteen times more numerous than the volunteers he had at his disposal. His moral teaching is full of common sense, and there are no exaggerations in it to make it look ideal yet remain impracticable. He will never say, turn your left cheek if one slaps you on the right, but he would say : "You are perfectly right if you take vengeance tit - for - tat, but if you forgive that would be meritorious for you with God." Thus his teaching remained practicable to an ordinary man in the street as to a saint, and this

teaching prevented the ordinary soul from transgressing and exceeding the reasonable limits. His religious teaching "gives God to man, and gives man to God", establishing direct relations between the two, without monopolists nor intermediaries. Muhammad's teaching of the "unicity" of God, of His innumerable attributes, of His love and mercy for His creatures are unequalled by others. The God of Islam is *rabb'ul-amin* (lord of worlds), *Wadud* (love), *rahim* (all - merciful), *ghafur* (all - pardon). He is just in punishing, but His mercy goes beyond His wrath (*rahmat, sabaqat ghadabe*, says a Hadith qudsi).

401. This, Muhammad taught and inculcated in human spirits, and when he had the satisfaction of having well accomplished his most difficult task, he preferred being in the "company on high" (*ma'ar - rafiq al - a'la*).

--- Allahumma salli'ala Muhammad !

CHAPTER 15

THE END OF THE WORLDLY LIFE

402. The missions with which prophets are charged by Divine call are always and everywhere arduous. The mission of Muhammad was the more so because he attacked of the totality of man and spared neither his dogmas nor his cult nor his family nor his social morality nor his politics. Fortunately he lived long enough. Although he did not begin his mission before having attained 40 years of life, still he had twenty three more years, full of energy and enthusiasm to apply to his task. Prophets never die, they only retire from the worldly life, but continue to exert their influence through those who believe in their mission. If death is, it is at the arrival of a new prophet : Abraham terminated the mission of Noah, Moses that of Abraham, Jesus that of Moses, Muhammad that of Jesus. Apart from the dogma, even historically no prophet worth the name has come after Muhammad and brought a teaching better than that of Muhammad.

403. He was 63 years old. The twenty three years of superhuman struggle had exhausted him. With the last spark of his energy, he undertook the tedious and long journey to Mecca - twelve days march on back of camel and as much to return - to perform the hajj. There his joy was immense when God revealed to him (5\3) : "This day have I perfected your religion for you, and completed My favour unto you, and have chosen for

you Islam as religion...". So the announcement of his forthcoming departure from the earth was a relief and a good tiding, and he was glad to have it, without least regret. In fact he received also the revelation (110\1-3):

When God's succour and triumph comes,
And thou seest mankind entering the religion of
God by legions,
Then hymn, purity of thy Lord by His praise, and
seek forgiveness of Him; verily He is ever
(ready) to accept repentance!

What a sane teaching: even the Prophet must ask God pardon and forgiveness! Muhammad was proud of being the slave of God, and had no pretension of being God or even the son of God.

405. After the triumphal pilgrimage, when he returned to Madina, soon after he fell ill. It was headache in the beginning. He was conscious of how he had done whatever he had done. So one night, in spite of his suffering, he rose up and went to the near-by cemetery - called with the charming name of "Paradise of Baqi'" (jannat al - Baqi) - and invoked long God's blessings on his departed companions with whose help and collaboration he had been able to have a new and final orientation to humanity in its march towards its destiny. The suffering increased, and very soon he was unable to get up and lead the congregation of his disciples for the service of prayer. He gave order that his faithful and intimate friend Abu-Bakr should replace him to lead the daily services. One day he felt better, and came out and did lead the prayer although resting sitting. There was relapse.

405. One of these days, he treated himself with a local precept: he asked to bring to his water of seven

different wells, and therewith he took a bath. This relieved him very much. With the help of two persons he came inside the mosque, and from the minbar he delivered a sermon so touching that people were moved and began to weep. He invoked for long the blessings of God on the martyrs of the bloody battle of Uhud, showing his gratitude to their unflinching fidelity and collaboration. He announced his approaching death by saying: "There was a slave of God, whom God had given the choice and he chose the company on high". Then he praised Abu-Bakr in extremely eulogeous terms, recognizing all the great and life-long help he had received from him, calling him his brother and his preferred friend. (This was a veiled recommendation - for he did not want to impose that explicitly - to select him as the caliph and successor to continue the work the Prophet had done.) He then turned to the Meccan Muslims, and impressed on their minds the merits of the Madinan Muslims, without whose hospitality and collaboration Islam could not have prospered, and counted long their merits. He insisted that one should never forget their services for the cause of Islam. Then he set an example by asking everybody present or absent to claim any right he had, and to pardon if he had offended anybody. He insisted on this so much, that one or two persons rose up and reminded that once the Prophet had borrowed from him the small sum or three dirhams and had forgotten to repay the debt. Satisfaction was given him immediately. He insisted again on the theme, and said any claim concerning person, property or honour should be made without least hesitation, and even extended to obligations vis-a-vis not only himself, but anybody else, and even the government and state (the community and collectivity). Then he took a strong stand against worship of the tombs of their prophets; never change after me my grave into an idol to worship". An expedition was then in preparation, to be led by Usama son of the ex-slave Zaid

ibn Haritha; he said it should go even if he died. (Most eminent companions of the Prophet were inscribed therein as volunteers, and the Prophet had vehemently rejected the suggestion of some people to nominate someone else as commander).

406. He returned to his bed tired. One more day he felt himself so better that he went out of the room at the time of one of the prayers, and had the greatest joy to see that the mosque was full of Muslims praying devoutly--the Muslims were also made of joy to see that the Prophet was feeling already better, yet they did nothing against the dignity of the prayer to God--but the Prophet could not advance, he smiled and returned to his bed. People were deceived. Abu-Bakr came and asked the permission to go and see his family, which he had not seen since several days; and went in the suburbs. Other visitors also came to see him. Apparently someone asked the Prophet to dictate a testament, and he ordered to bring pen and paper. Then a discussion arose: Should or should not one trouble the Prophet to dictate a testament after his having already orally told what he had to tell. (In fact people remembered that they had annoyed him during the battle of Uhud also, and asked him to do what he did not like very much; and the result was the discomfiture in that battle. In his speech inside the Mosque the Prophet had longly spoken of the battle of Uhud.) Seeing the discussion, the Prophet asked them to retire.

407. Some hours later the illness took again its force. He swooned, then he came back to his senses. He could no more talk. He saw a tooth brush in the hand of a visitor. He looked at it so eagerly that people understood his desire to brush his teeth; it was done, and one saw satisfaction on his face. Sometime later, he repeated thrice: "There is no God if not God Himself,

what an agony in the death". the last word one heard of him was: "No, but in company on High",--as if selecting the choice offered to him. His wife 'A'isha, who was keeping his head on her bosom, says: "that was the end, but I was too young, and did not know what had happened. When others began lamentation, the alone I understood what had taken place. I placed gently his head on the cushion and joined those who wept and cried".

408. there was a celebrated gland on the back of the Prophet, and he considered it to be the seal of prophethood. According to chroniclers, on his death one observed that it had disappeared.

BURIAL AND SUCCESSION

409. Messenger of God, builder of the grandiose edifice of Islam and of the Muslim State, has he died? Nobody could imagine it. It was so unexpected, so unbelievable. Sorrow he took everybody. Some persons literally went mad of the great affliction, and one of them began menacing people with his unsheathed sword: "No, he has not died, he cannot die; if anyone says that he has died, I shall smite his neck!" The news spread far and wide, and fast. According to the best reports, it was Monday 2nd Rabi'ul-Auwal 11 H. (25th May 632), day time, (12th Rabi'ul-Auwal being more popular).

410. Learning that, Abu-Bakr returned immediately, and went hurriedly into the house of the Prophet. His daughter 'A'isha, wife of the Prophet, took of the piece of cloth with which the body was covered. Abu-Bakr gave a kiss on the forehead in reverence, covered again the body, and came directly in the mosque. When he mounted on the minbar, calm was at once restored, and everybody wanted to hear him in silence, with curiosity. He began his speech by reciting a verse of the Quran (3/44):

"Muhammad is but a messenger; messengers have passed away before him. Will it be that, when he died or is slain, ye will turn back on your heels? He who turn the back on his two heels doth not hurt God at all, whereas God will reward

the thankful."

Then he added: "One who worshipped Muhammad, let him know that Muhammad has died; one who worshipped God, let him know that God is living, and shall never die". and he concluded by suggesting that the commandment of the community should not be left vacant, and that someone should be selected to succeed him.

411. Everybody agreed to the suggestion, and said: Yes, we shall talk of it tomorrow (after the burial). And people dispersed in sorrow. Illusions had disappeared, lamentation was great, but the powerful personality of Abu-Bakr rallied everybody, and everybody turned to him to get instructions. And problems were many.

412. First of, where to bury him? Abu-Bakr decided it easily by saying that he remembered the Prophet having one day said: "prophets are buried on the very spot where they breath their last". What kind of Tomb? There was a Meccan way of digging, and there was a Madinan way. Abu-Bakr said: Send word to a Meccan grave-digger and also to a Madinan one, and leave the matter to providence; whoever of these two comes first, will be confided with the task. Womenfolk retired, and the male cousins of the Prophet gave the body the usual wash, without even uncovering him completely.

413. In the meanwhile a most serious thing happened which alarmed the prominent personalities:

414. During the very last days of the illness of the Prophet, al-'Abbas, uncle of the Prophet, had come to his nephew 'Ali and said: There is not much hope of the Prophet recovering from this illness, he has said nothing clear on the subject of his succession to power; come, let

us ask him : If that is to be a heritage in his family, we shall know that, if not, we shall be the witnesses of his last desire ! 'Ali said : "No, I shall not go along with you, because if he does not give us the political succession now, nobody will ever give it to us later." When the Prophet died, al-'Abbas again went to 'Ali, and said : "We are the nearest relatives of the Prophet, (I am his uncle and first heir, you his cousin), extend to me your hand, I shall pay you homage as the successor of the Prophet, others will follow, and nobody will object; if you refuse, the opportunity will be lost" 'Ali was too disciplined to place others before a fait accompli, and said : "No, not so, during the public consultation nobody would deny our right to succeed!"

415. On the day following the death of the Prophet, the Madinan tribe of the Khazraj held a meeting to deliberate. It was a semi-secret gathering, and particularly the Meccan Muslims were deliberately excluded. Probably they never intended a decision, but only wanted to adopt the general line of the policy to follow in the public meeting. The gathering thought that the succession should develop on them, because they constituted the majority of the population of Madina, (in fact the Ausites were only a third as numerous as the Khazarajites). And everybody seemed to concur that their principal chief Sa'd ibn 'Ubada should be chosen for the function.

416. A member of the Aus got news, and hurried to the mosque, and communicated it to Abu-Bakr. This later wanted to remind the Khazraj that it was against the decisions made, and one should not deliberate in the absence of others. Fearing that if he did not do that, and if something is decided, it would be difficult to undo it later. So he hurried with two friends who were then on his side, 'Umar and Abu 'Ubaida (both of Mecca), and

went to the club of the Banu Sa'ida (*saqifa*), where the meeting was taking place. They saluted and took place in the room, nobody refusing their participation. Some more Meccans also followed.

417. Soon after, the Khazarajite Thabit ibn Qais stood up, and enumerated the merits of the Ansar (Madinan), and suggested that the successor to political power of the Prophet should be an Ansarite; and asked to know the reaction of the Meccans. Deliberations had begun and the issue could not be avoided. So Abu-Bakr rose up and said that in his opinion only a Meccan can command respect all over Arabia, and enumerating the great capacities of 'Umar and of Abu 'Ubaida, suggested the audience to select any of the two as the successor. 'Umar refused to be a candidate and the discussion began to turn more and more passionate. Thereupon a Khazarajite, al-Hubab ibn al-Mundhir got up to propose a compromise : "Well then let there be two emirs, one from us and one from among you".

418. The following details shed some light on the confused situation : According to Ibn Sa'd (III/1, p. 151): the original proposal was couched in the following terms : "Whenever the Prophet appointed a governor (*'amil*) from among you, he joined to him someone from us; so we think that this commandership (*amr*) should be confided to two persons, one from you, the other from us". Apparently it was shown that it would create difficulties if the two sometimes did not agree. The report of ad-Diyarbakri (II, 168-9) seems to be the second and modified proposal : "The Ansar said : If you nominate someone from among you today, when he dies, we shall take someone from among us Ansarites; and when he dies, we shall take someone from among the Muhajrun (Meccans). In this way we shall continue so long as this Community survives." According to al-

Bukhari (ch. 62, section 5, Hadith No 18) Abu-Bakr particularly addressed to the Khazarajite candidate Sa'd ibn 'Ubada, and said : "Don't you remember, Sa'd, that one day when you were sitting in the presence of the Prophet, he had said : The commandership belongs to the Quraish (Meccans) : the good among the (general) people follow the good among the Quraish, and the evil of them the evil ones from among the same? Sa'd recognized and said : You tell the truth, we shall be the viziris and you the emirs".

419. The choice of the person was not yet made, and there seems to be some reticence among some individuals. 'Umar thereupon rose up and forced the issue : he snatched the hand of Abu-Bakr and exclaimed : Nobody can be better than Abu-Bakr, and he wanted to pay formally the homage, whereupon a Khazrajite Bashir ibn Sa'd,--who, according to al-Waqidi, was one of those Khazrajites who had opposed to the proposal of their cousin, al-Hubab, to divide the power into two emirs--jumped up and said : Wait, we all agree to Abu-Bakr but nobody should pay him homage before me. (This pious person seemed to have wished that there should remain no heart-burning among the Madinans to the selection of a Meccan to caliphate, if a Madinan were to take the initiative of taking the oath of allegiance; what a fine example of good Islam and selflessness!) that was done, and others followed suit. And without any premeditation, deliberation took place before the time originally fixed for it.

420. As the decision was reached in a hurry and in a confused assembly,--although all ended well and in perfect calm--there was no time to invite those dignitaries who were not present, particularly the members of the family of the Prophet, who were busy with the preparations of the burial. So Abu-Bakr did not

consider the decision as definite, and he wanted to reopen. Anyhow, from the Saqifa of Banu Sa'ida, people went to the house of the Prophet. The room where the Prophet had died, and where his body was resting by the side of the grave that was dug, there was no room for a congregational funeral prayer for the beloved Prophet, and nobody dared transport his body to an open place to accommodate the entire population of Madina; so it was decided that people should enter in small groups and pray individually. Naturally this took a very long time to complete, practically the whole night. when at last Muslim prayed for him, the burial took place.

421. Abu-Bakr then asked people to general assembly where he told them that he did not consider the decision of the Saqifa as definite, and that all were free to reopen the question and elect whomever they liked. Naturally there was no opposition, and all those present renewed their oath of allegiance. Then Abu-Bakr made a short but meaningful speech :

"People, I have been chosen as your chief although I am not the best of you. Therefore if I act well help me, and if I act ill correct me. The veracity is to have confidence, and the abuse of confidence is the lie. The weak (oppressed) from among you will remain strong in my eyes until I obtain for him his right; and the strong (oppressor) from among you will remain weak in my eyes until I extract right from him. And all this by the permission of God. Listen! There is no people which neglect to fight for the cause of God, which should not be put into humiliation by God. Never does immorality spread among a people without that God afflict it with some calamity. Obey me so long as I obey God and His messenger; as soon as I disobey God and His

messenger, you have not to obey me at all. Come now for the service of prayer, may God be merciful to you!"

After the service of prayer people dispersed.

Why not Ali?

422. 'Ali was not elected to the post of caliph. Why?

423. It is a controverted matter among Muslims for over a thousand years, and it has become a question of dogmas, creating schism and dividing the Sunnis from the Shi'as. I do not pretend to be able to reconcile them, I do not even want to open the discussion here, since it has nothing to do with the biography of the Prophet. Some historical facts could be brought into relief here :

424. Al-Jahiz was neither a Sunni nor a Shi'a, but a Mu'tazili; he was not even a theologian, but a man of letters. His opinions do not constitute law for Muslims, yet a point raised by him, in his book "Risala 'Uthmaniya" (on the partisans of the caliphate of 'Uthman), whose unique MS is in the Koprulu Library Istanbul--and is now published--which has given me food for thought. He says that 'Ali as a great warrior had killed very many prominent men of Mecca during their battles with the Prophet. The descendants of these pagans had embraced Islam, but as human beings they did not forget that it was 'Ali who had killed their parents. So, thinks al-Jahiz, they were not very enthusiastic to Ali's becoming caliph. The suggestion is nice, but I do not think that it is very relevant, because it was not these younger Muslims that decided the issue at the death of the Prophet, it was the veterans that did that.

425. The question of heritage does not arise in fact. Government is no property to pass to heirs. Even if it were, the Prophet had said : "We group of prophets, do not leave private property to inherit; whatever we leave is government property (sadaqa)" Even if one were to disregard that, saying that the context is different, it is clear that according to Muslim law of inheritance, the nearer relative bars the remote from inheriting, and all agree that an uncle is the nearer relative than the son of an uncle. An uncle, al-'Abbas was alive; further, 'Ali was not the only cousin, there were many others there, and the government could not be divided among several heirs. Inheritance goes also to daughters, and the daughters, Fatima, was there. It is not proved that a woman cannot become head of the State, since the Quran speaks of the queen of Sheba, Bilqis, and affirms that she had embraced Islam at the hands of the Prophet Solomon. So better not talk of the right of 'Ali on account of heritage.

426. The affirmation of testament requires proof. A testament of the Prophet will disarm any and every Muslim. Had he really made a testament in that sense? I hesitate to believe that for the following fact : Why 'Ali himself did not mention that? It is possible to admit that the caliphate was an insignificant thing in his eyes, so when Abu-Bakr and 'Umar and 'Uthman were somehow elected, he made a self-sacrifice, and did not object; but why he remained silent in his correspondence later with Mu'awiya? He did not admit the pretension of Mu'awiya, so much so that he did not hesitate to take up arms against him. Shi'a books, Nahj al-Balagha for instance, have recorded all the correspondent exchanged between 'Ali and Mu'awiya for claim and counter-claim of caliphate. 'Ali argues that he is from the family of the Prophet--apparently suggesting inheritance--but not a word is there to affirm that the Prophet had made a

testament in his favour.

427. In my humble opinion the question should no more divide Muslims, because today neither 'Ali nor Abu-Bakr nor Mu'awiya are in life, and all of them have already been judged by God. It is not a matter of practical politics to discuss--and dispute over--whether 'Ali had or had not a right to be the immediate successor of the Prophet in political power.

428. Personally I think that in this matter Providence had strangely realized some of the most cherished desires of the Prophet :

429. He used to declare publicly : "We do not employ for public function those who are eagerly seeking that". It was necessary that the persons who were most close and most intimate to the Prophet should not be tarnished by such desires. We know who had sought caliphate and who had not. Abu-Bakr can be least accused of seeking the office.

430. The Prophet had also declared the perfect equality of all the races, and the only superiority he recognized was the individual piety based on fear of God. The election of a near relative of the Prophet, however pious and capable, would have compromised this reform and the budding tradition, creating dynastic rule. Let us recall again that Abu-Bakr belonged to the Banu Taim, a branch of the Quraish which was most despised in pre-Islamic days, since it was not even in the descendance of the famous chief, Qusaiy. A poet had spoken satirically and mockingly :

"The public affair is decided when Taim are absent. Even when they are present, one does not consult them !"

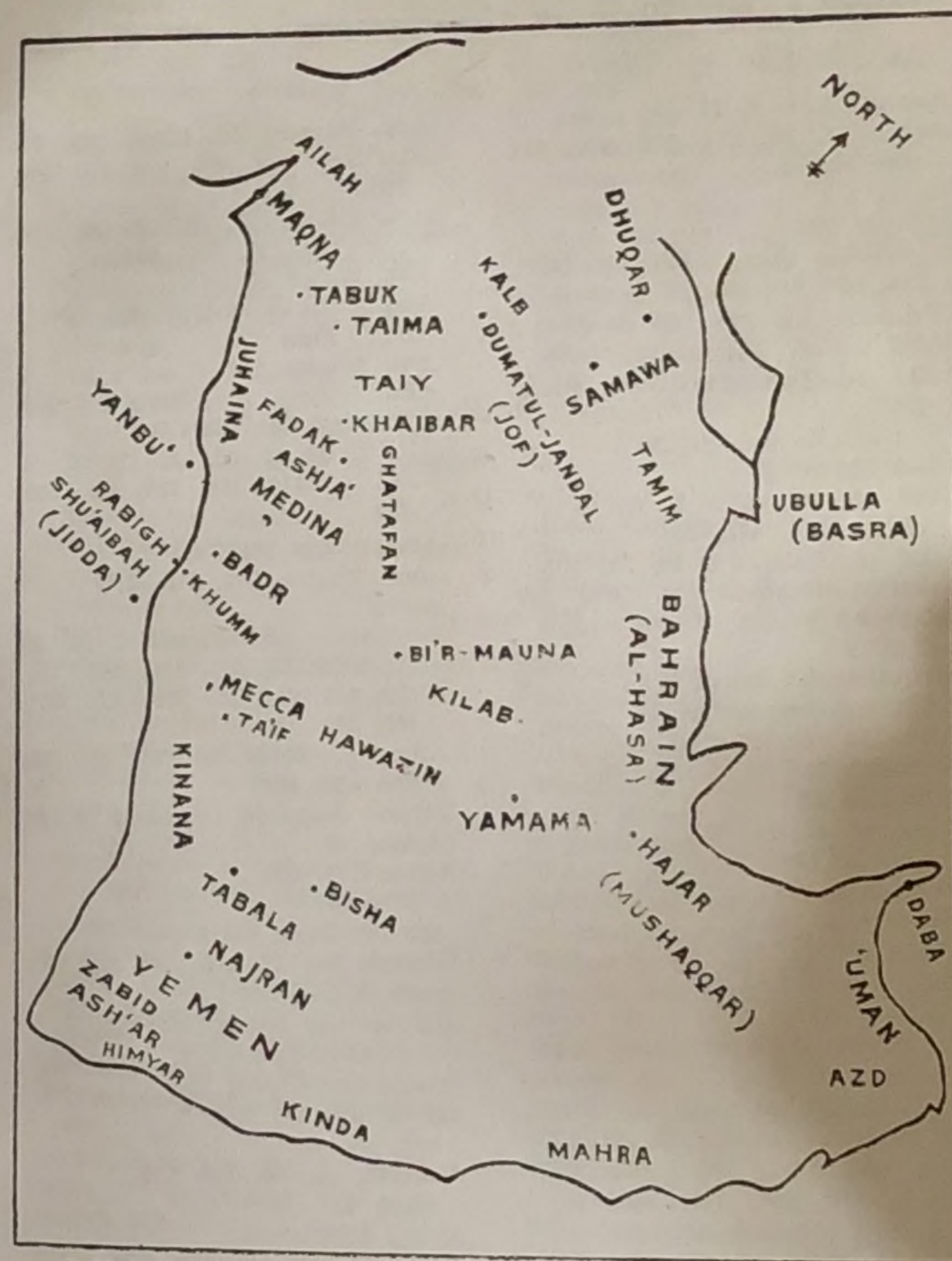
This emphasis of the individual merit without reference to this genealogy opened the way later in Islam to accept even freed slaves as rulers without hesitation.

431. During the 25 occasions when the Prophet had left Madina on some expedition, he always nominated a vicegerant--and historians have called him "khalifa"--but not always the same person, implying that he was the second personality of the realm the heir-apparent or heir-presumptive. Among these there were not only the Meccans, but also the Madinans, those from the tribe of Kinana, and several times even a blind person, (as during his last absence, for the Farewell pilgrimage, constituting his latest precedent). We do not know the context of his oft-quoted saying : "The imams (heads of government) are from the Quraish". I myself have reasons to believe that it was a prediction and not an order. In fact I have found this saying quoted in a Hadith, where the Prophet had predicted that there will be so many caliphs, all of whom would be of Quraishite origin. Further, the caliph 'Umar was later worried whom to nominate as his successor, and used to say : "If Salim, client of Hudaifa, were alive, I would have without least hesitation selected him to succeed me", and this Salim was not a Quraishite, not even an Arab, for, according to his biographer (Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, *al-Isti'ab*) he was of Iranian origin, from Istakhar, Persipolis.

432. When I was in the primary school a teacher of mine had told us in the class what has ever since given me of for thought. He had said : 'Ali was the youngest of the four Rightly Guided Caliphs, had he been elected in the very first instance we would not have profited by the individual talents and qualities of Abu Bakr, 'Umar and 'Uthman, who would have died before budding during the caliphate of 'Ali; with what has providentially happened, we have profited by the capacities of each and

all of them.

433. One more reason to terminate : Every Muslim will agree, be he Sunni or Shi'a, that the present world is a transitory thing, and that the everlasting Hereafter is the more important of the two. Temporal and political affairs concern this world, and spiritual affairs concern the Hereafter. The Prophet cumulated in his hands all human affairs, be they temporal or spiritual. After him, the Muslim community divided them into two categories: external and internal. In the external section were included not only politics but also the external and public acts of cult, prayer, fasting, hajj, zakat inclusive. In internal affairs were grouped all spiritual matters, which we commonly treat under the name of mysticism. The Prophet has had separate successors for both these sections, and both the termed caliphs. With this particularity however that, for the external sanction, one did not tolerate more than one caliph at a time, (and we have just seen that the Ansarite suggestion to have two emirs, was rejected from the very beginning), whereas for the internal section there is no limit to the immediate caliphs of the Prophet, since there is no jealousy in this realm. In fact there have been numerous caliphs, from among the companions of the Prophet, in the spiritual realm. Who does not know that to the Naqshbandiya, it was Abu-Bakr who was the spiritual caliph, and to the Qadriya or Suhrawardiya, it was 'Ali. Both were caliphs simultaneously, in the same town even. It was even permitted that a Muslim could take allegiance of both--and of several--simultaneously. It is common today that a man should for instance be affiliated simultaneously in the Naqshbandiya and Suhrawardiya silsilas. Both Sunnis and Shi'as admit this fact. All else is logomachy to me. God guide and guard us!



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Appendix

Page 86 line 22 on the word "God".

As just mentioned, he met some prophet in each of the seven heavens, surpassed the limit even of Gabriel, outdistanced the divine secretariat and "close collaborators of God" (*mala'ika muqarrabin*, Quran 4/172), before being admitted to the very presence of the Lord. There is food for thought. Out of the 124,000 traditionally reported prophets, only eight have their abodes in the heavens; Adam in the first, John and Jesus jointly in the second, Joseph in the third, Idris (Enoch) in the fourth, Aaron in the fifth, Moses in the sixth, and Abraham in the seventh. These seem to have been those who too had had their *mi'raj*, and the Quran testifies to that. Adam was in Paradise, before his fall and was very close to God. John had baptized Jesus, so the latter was a disciple and continuator of the former; and when Jesus was raised to God (Q. 4/158), that concerned John also. As to Joseph, God's manifestation came to him. (Q. 12/24) when he had almost succumbed to the solicitations of the wife of the minister of Egypt. As to Enoch, he was raised to a high place (Q. 19/57). Aaron was an associate and co-prophet along with Moses (Q. 20/32); so when Moses witnessed the manifestation of God (Q. 7/143), that concerned Aaron as much. As to Abraham, God had shown him His superkingdom of heavens and earth (Q. 6/175). In order to surpass somebody, one must first become equal with him in rank. Meeting these prophets implies also obtaining their characteristics in a more pre-eminent degree (cf § 7 supra): Adam had the courage to admit this sin and repent before the invisible God. John-Jesus had no interest in material and worldly pleasures. Joseph set the example of chastity. Idris is reported by Muhammad as to have been the inventor of writing which alone has enabled all human progress and civilisation. Aaron and Moses tried saving the Believers from the religious persecution of the tyrannical Pharaoh, and tried for that to establish an independent State with theocratical form. Abraham gave us the purest notion of the unicity of God, and distinguished between God and God's actions. These are the essential traits of a good Believer, and Muhammad obtained them all. He even surpassed angels. And he included us, humble believers, in the Divine benedictions along with him. How can a Muslim not love such a kind prophet (Q. 9/128), and not be proud of him?

